

Turkey

*Timothy L. Francis, Laura J. Hilton,
Sedat Cem Karadeli, Keith A. Leitich,
Paul G. Pierpaoli Jr., and Spencer C. Tucker*

The Republic of Turkey is a Eurasian nation covering 300,948 square miles. Bordering eight countries, Turkey is strategically located in both Europe and Asia Minor and includes the important Turkish Straits (the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus) connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and separating Thrace from Anatolia. Eastern Thrace is the small geographical area of European Turkey. It is bordered by Greece to the west and Bulgaria to the northwest. The Aegean Sea is to the east, and the Mediterranean is to the south. Most of Turkey lies in Asia Minor, in Anatolia. In Asia Minor, Turkey shares common borders with Georgia to the northwest; Armenia, Iran, and the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhchivan to the east; and Syria and Iraq to the south. The Black Sea is to the north.

Turkey is a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic. A president, elected by popular vote, is head of state. There is also a prime minister, elected by parliament. In 2016 Turkey had a population of some 79.622 million. Its capital city is Ankara. Ethnic Turks constitute some 70–75 percent of the population, while Kurds make up perhaps 18 percent. Muslims are said to make up between 96.4 and 99.8 percent of the population. Three-quarters of these are Sunni Muslims. There are perhaps 200,000 Christians and 26,000 Jews.

An important regional power, Turkey has a strong military. Its 411,000 active-duty personnel and 186,000 personnel in the active reserve give Turkey the second-largest military establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). One source ranks Turkey's military as the world's eighth strongest. Turkey, which is a member of the United Nations (UN), NATO, the Council of Europe, and the G-20, became an associate member of the European Economic Commission in 1963, joined the European Union Customs Union in 1995, and started full membership negotiations with the European Union (EU) in 2005.

Turkey was home to many ancient civilizations, including those of the Greeks, Thracians, Armenians, and Assyrians. It then formed the eastern reaches of the Persian Empire, which was conquered by King Alexander III (the Great) of Macedon in 334 BCE and Hellenized. Although Turkey was subsequently part of the Roman Empire, Greek language and culture predominated.

In 324 CE, Emperor Constantine I designated Byzantium on the Bosphorus as the new capital of the Roman Empire. In 395 the empire was permanently divided, and Byzantium, popularly known as Constantinople, became the capital of the Eastern

Roman Empire, later designated the Byzantine Empire. Between the 3rd and 7th centuries the Byzantine Empire engaged in frequent warfare with the Sassanid Empire to the east, with the result that both were weakened to the extent that they fell prey to Muslim conquest. The Seljuk Turks became a threat in the 11th century and defeated the Byzantines in the important Battle of Manzikert in 1071.

Osman I established the Ottoman Empire in 1299. Constantinople (now Istanbul) fell in 1453, and the empire subsequently included a considerable swath of the Mediterranean Basin, including much of Southeastern Europe, Western Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. The empire reached the peak of its power and influence from the 15th to 17th centuries, especially under Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1526–1566). After the failure of a second Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683 and the end of the Great Turkish War in 1699, the Ottoman Empire underwent steady decline and came to be known as “the Sick Man of Europe.”

Russian efforts to secure control of the Bosphorus and gain access to the Mediterranean brought the Crimean War of 1853–1856. Britain and France supported the Ottomans. Most of the fighting occurred in the Crimean Peninsula, with the major military operation being the siege of the Russian Black Sea port and the naval base of Sevastopol (October 17, 1854–September 9, 1855). The allies, joined by the Kingdom of Sardinia (Sardinia-Piedmont), at last secured Sevastopol and victory in the war.

Nonetheless, Russia persisted. It formed a coalition with the Ottoman principalities of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro and then in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 secured Kars and Batumi in the Caucasus and annexed the Budjak region. Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro were all formally recognized as independent, and Bulgaria was recognized as a principality. The subsequent Congress of Berlin also allowed Austria-Hungary to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina and allowed Great Britain to secure Cyprus, ceded by the Ottomans in return for British protection against Russia.

Ottoman weakness brought increasing demands from within the empire for reform. Turkish nationalism was also on the rise. In 1908 the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), part of the Young Turk movement, convinced Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) to restore the parliament. Following an attempted counterrevolution later that year the CUP deposed the sultan and then on April 27, 1909 replaced him with his younger brother, Mehmed V.

Italy also sought to take advantage to secure Tripoli (present-day Libya). Italy declared war on September 29, 1911. Although Italian forces quickly occupied the city of Tripoli and outnumbered the scattered Ottoman garrisons, Italian forces were largely confined to coastal beachheads well into 1912. The war was brought to an end only when the Italians expanded the conflict to the eastern Mediterranean. In the Treaty of Lausanne of October 18, 1912, Italy secured sovereignty over Libya.

As many observers had predicted, Italy's success encouraged the Balkan states to try to take the remaining Ottoman territory in Europe. Montenegro declared war on October 8, 1912, followed by Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. During the next eight months, the larger and better-armed military establishments of the Balkan powers overcame the numerically inferior and strategically disadvantaged Ottoman

armies. During October 28–November 3, the Bulgarians won a major victory over the Ottomans at Lulé Burgas. They then advanced to the last Ottoman defenses before Istanbul, although the Russians then warned the Bulgarians not to attempt to occupy the city. On November 16–18 the Serbs defeated the badly outnumbered Ottomans in the Battle of Monastir (Bitola), giving the Serbs control of southwestern Macedonia.

An acute international crisis ensued on November 24 when the Austro-Hungarian government announced its opposition to Serbian access to the Adriatic and insisted on the creation of an independent Albania. Italy supported the Austrians, while Russia backed Serbia. With both Austria and Russia mobilizing and with Austria allied to Germany and Russia allied to France, a general European war threatened. The crisis receded when Russia—clearly unready for war—withdrawed its support from Serbia. On December 3 the Ottomans concluded an armistice with Bulgaria and Serbia, and a peace conference opened in London, only to collapse when the Ottomans refused to surrender Adrianople, the Aegean Islands, and Crete.

On January 23, a day after the major powers convinced the Ottoman government to yield Adrianople, a coup d'état occurred in Istanbul. The empire's steady stream of military defeats greatly discredited Mehmed V, and the CUP Young Turks seized power. A triumvirate now dominated Ottoman affairs: Ismail Enver Pasha as minister of war, Mehmed Talât Pasha as minister of the interior, and Ahmed Djemal Pasha as naval minister.



A photograph of the battlefield during the Siege of Adrianople (November 3, 1912–March 26, 1913) during the Balkan Wars. Adrianople, now known as Edirne, is in northeastern Turkey. (Library of Congress)

On February 3 the war resumed. The Bulgarians secured Adrianople on March 26. On April 16 the Ottomans concluded an armistice with Bulgaria, and the other warring Balkan powers soon followed suit. Tensions remained high over Albania, however, with both Montenegro and Serbia opposing its independence and occupying territory assigned to it and only yielding it under threat of war with Austria-Hungary. Talks in London resumed, and the Balkan states accepted the settlement developed by the Great Powers. In the Treaty of London of May 30 the Ottoman Empire ceded to the Balkan states the vast majority of its territory in Europe.

The victorious Balkan states now fell to quarreling among themselves regarding the spoils. Bulgaria had been the big winner territorially, but there were sharp differences between it and Serbia and Greece over Macedonia. Greece and Serbia resolved their own differences, and on June 1, 1913, they concluded a treaty of alliance against Bulgaria. With Greece and Serbia now planning war, on June 29 Bulgarian commander General Michael Savov opted for a preemptive strike without informing his government. Although the Bulgarian government subsequently disavowed Savov's action, the Serbs and Greeks, joined by Romania and even Ottoman forces, attacked Bulgaria in the Second Balkan War. By July 30, Bulgaria had been defeated. Under the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest of August 10, Bulgaria was left with only a small portion of Macedonia. On September 29 in a treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, the Ottomans recovered Adrianople in Europe and territory up to the Maritza River.

The Balkans were now largely a tinderbox. The rival European big power alliance systems of the Dual Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary and the Triple Entente of Russia, France, and Great Britain courted the Ottoman Empire, for in 1914 it still controlled all Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine. Germany won the struggle for influence, and in December 1913 a military mission led by Lieutenant General Otto Liman von Sanders arrived in Istanbul to help reorganize the Ottoman Army.

Following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, the Austrian government actively sought war with Serbia, seeing the opportunity to end the threat to its own existence posed by Slavic nationalism. On July 28 Austrian forces invaded Serbia, beginning the Third Balkan War, which a few days later became World War I when Russia mobilized and Germany declared war on it. On August 2, Ottoman leaders signed a secret alliance with Germany promising joint action if Russia intervened militarily in the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. The next day the Ottoman Empire mobilized its military.

The Entente rejected Enver Pasha's offer of neutrality in return for a large loan and modification of the financial concessions enjoyed by the European powers in the Ottoman Empire. The British government had sequestered two Ottoman dreadnoughts under construction in British yards. As the ships had been paid for by public subscription, this action rallied Ottoman public opinion against the Entente. Enver also accepted a gift of the German battle cruiser *Goeben* and light cruiser *Breslau*, both of which had eluded French and British warships in the Mediterranean and escaped into the straits and then to Istanbul.

On September 8 the Ottoman Empire abolished the financial capitulations. And on October 28 the *Goeben* and *Breslau* (given Turkish names but still under German command) attacked Russian ports and shipping in the Black Sea. Russia declared war on November 4, followed by Britain and France the next day. On November 14 Mehmed V proclaimed jihad (holy war) against the Entente.

The Ottoman Empire's entry into World War I had immense consequences. Closure of the Dardanelles isolated Russia from its allies and severely weakened its ability to wage war. Great Britain was also forced to shift major resources to protect the Suez Canal. Soon Ottoman forces were fighting in Caucasia, Egypt, and Mesopotamia as well as in Europe at the Dardanelles.

At home the CUP leadership instituted numerous administrative and bureaucratic reforms and also worked to improve infrastructure. The government also challenged the power of the influential Islamic clerics by bringing Islam more under its own control. Prior to the war, the government had subordinated the Islamic courts to its secular system. During the war, the government secularized the religious courts and schools. The government also carried out major reforms in the emancipation of women, equalizing their legal rights in marriage and inheritance and enhancing educational and employment opportunities for girls and women.

The Ottoman leadership believed that the war would be short and thus failed to institute planning to secure sufficient food and civilian supplies for an extended conflict. By 1915, there was a grain shortage in Istanbul and many other cities. Famine became widespread because of the lack of agricultural laborers (many had been conscripted into the military), a prolonged drought, and the monopolization of railroads by the military. War refugees fleeing to the cities brought instability and a further drain on resources. Inflation skyrocketed, reaching perhaps 400 percent in the first year of the war alone.

While the potentially most dangerous front for the Ottomans was Thrace, where the frontier was less than 180 miles from the national capital, the major Ottoman military effort came in Caucasia. Enver hoped to catch the Russians off guard, regain territory lost to the Russians earlier, and stimulate revolts among Muslims in southern Russia.

The Ottoman Army was, however, unready for war. Ignoring this, the weather, mountainous terrain, and supply problems, Enver launched his Third Army from Armenia on December 17, 1914. Following some initial success, the Ottomans were badly mauled by the Russians in the Battle of Sariklamish (December 22, 1914–January 17, 1915). Rebuilt in the spring of 1915, the Third Army was almost destroyed in the Russian Erzurum Offensive early in 1916. Later in the same year, the Second Army was nearly destroyed in an offensive farther south in the Caucasus. After that, the war in the east ground to a halt. In 1918, after the November 1917 Bolshevik Revolution brought a Russian military withdrawal from Caucasia, the Third Army went over to the offensive and penetrated deep into Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In the European portions of the empire, the First and Fifth Armies under Liman von Sanders turned back and inflicted heavy losses on the Entente's Gallipoli landing of April 1915. But when the Allies broke out from Salonika in 1918, there was nothing left to prevent them from entering Istanbul.

The British easily rebuffed Ottoman efforts to seize the Suez Canal from Palestine in 1915 and 1916. Afterward, the Sinai-Palestinian front evolved into a state of protracted, indecisive warfare, aggravated by the rising Arab Revolt. During 1916–1917 the British built up their resources, and in 1918 the German-Ottoman army group finally collapsed under repeated attacks, and British forces seized Jerusalem and Damascus.

In Mesopotamia, an Anglo-Indian thrust toward Baghdad ended in a Turkish triumph on April 29, 1916, when an entire division surrendered to the Ottoman Sixth Army at Kut. Thereafter this theater remained more or less quiet until the British renewed their advance in 1918. Several Turkish invasions of Persia proved to be insignificant.

The war badly weakened the empire's internal stability. Two groups in particular rebelled against rule from Istanbul: the Armenian Christians in eastern Anatolia and the Arabs in the Hejaz. The Armenians, who sought independence, forced the Ottomans to divert troops there from major campaigns elsewhere. In an effort to stabilize the situation, the government forcibly relocated the Armenian population to the Syrian Desert, an area remote from potential collusion with the Russians. Inadequate water, food, clothing, and medical supplies brought the deaths of as many as 1.5 million Armenians in the forced desert march and other government operations both during and after World War I. This episode in Turkish history has been called the Armenian Massacre and, controversially, the Armenian Genocide.

The other major source of revolt was the Arab community of the Hejaz. Its push for independence began in June 1916 under the leadership of Sharif Hussein ibn

The Armenian Genocide

The Armenian Genocide, as it is generally referred to in the West (it is also known as the Armenian Massacre and the Armenian Holocaust), refers to the Ottoman government's systematic extermination of much of its minority Armenian populations within the territory of the present-day Republic of Turkey during World War I. Rising Armenian nationalism, the service of many Armenians in the Russian Army, and fears of Armenian collusion with the Russians in the fighting in Caucasia led to the massacre. It began on April 24, 1915, with the Ottoman government's arrest of some 250 Armenian leaders in Istanbul (Constantinople) and their deportation to Ankara, where most were murdered or died in confinement. Ottoman Army commanders then oversaw the murder of able-bodied Armenian men, while chiefly Armenian women, children, the elderly, and the infirm were forced into death marches into the Syrian Desert. Other Christian groups, including Greeks, were also targeted. The total death toll may have been as high as 1.5 million of the 2 million Armenians in the empire in 1914.

The Turkish government continues to deny the genocide as an impossibility, but a growing number of governments and prominent individuals have asserted it as such.

Ali. His third son, Prince Faisal, and British lieutenant colonel T. E. Lawrence played key roles in this, supporting the British military campaign in Palestine and Syria in 1917 and 1918. The Arab insurgents forced the Ottomans to divert troops and attention from the main British advances.

An armistice ending Ottoman participation in the war was signed on October 30, 1918, aboard the British battleship *Agamemnon* off the island of Mudros. Allied troops then occupied much of the empire. According to recent estimates, in the war the Ottomans suffered some 770,000 dead and 760,000 wounded, each about 27 percent of the manpower mobilized; some 145,000 were taken prisoner.

The government at Istanbul meanwhile disintegrated, and its leaders fled. The Ottoman Empire unofficially ended on November 15 when Sultan Mehmed VI, who had succeeded to the throne only in October on the death of Mehmed V, established a new government under the control of Greek and British troops. The British, French, and Italians then established a tripartite administration of Istanbul, garrisoned the Alexandretta-Smyrna-Constantinople Railway, and encouraged the creation of independent Georgian and Armenian armies. A buildup of British, Italian, French, and Greek forces also occurred.

Turkish nationalist resistance to these moves developed first in eastern Anatolia, particularly under General Mustafa Kemal in Samsun and General Kazim Karabekir in Erzurum. The nationalists turned to the Bolsheviks of Russia for military aid, concluding an agreement the following spring. Contact with the Bolsheviks also provided a bargaining chip with the anticommunist British.

On May 15, 1919, a large Greek force occupied Smyrna (Izmir). The Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923) can be said to have begun on May 19 with clashes between Greek and Turkish nationalist forces. The Greco-Turkish War is known to the Turks as the Western Front. Fighting in the east was largely between the Turks and Armenians. During September 4–11, an assembly of Turkish nationalist representatives from all the Anatolia provinces met in the city of Sivas in east-central Turkey.

On March 16, 1920, British troops seized government buildings in Istanbul and set up a pro-Allied cabinet, preparatory to forcing the Ottoman government to sign the punitive Treaty of Sèvres (August 10, 1920). In it, Ottoman control would be largely restricted to Anatolia, with the economy controlled by the Entente. The treaty made the Kingdom of Hejaz independent, gave Smyrna and many Aegean islands to Greece, ceded the Dodecanese Islands to Italy, internationalized the Turkish Straits, and granted Armenia independence. In addition, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia were established as independent states under French and British mandates. The latter two powers also signed the San Remo oil agreement, delimiting their oil interests in Persia, Mesopotamia, and the Caucasus. These demands were presented to the sultan and the pro-Allied cabinet on June 10, 1920. Twelve days later, about 60,000 Greek troops advanced from Smyrna.

The Turkish forces were unprepared for the Greek military advance, and the Greek columns soon seized major cities in western Anatolia and Adrianople in Thrace. In the east an Armenian attack collapsed near Erzurum, and a Turkish counterattack forced the Armenians to sue for peace. The ensuing peace treaty reduced

Armenia to the province of Erivan. On March 16, 1921, the Turkish nationalists signed a treaty with Soviet Russia delimiting the border in the east and securing additional military assistance.

On March 23, 1921, the Greeks opened a new offensive toward Ankara. It soon stalled, but the Greeks regrouped and advanced again in July. The Turks withdrew across the Sakarya River and stood on the defensive. During August 23–September 16, they fought a successful series of meeting engagements known as the Battle of the Sakarya across a 120-mile front. At this point the French (as with the Italians earlier in the summer) agreed to withdraw from Anatolia in return for economic concessions.

During the winter, the British attempted to negotiate an end to the war through a partial revision of the Treaty of Sèvres. The nationalists in Ankara refused, and the Turks took the offensive on August 18, 1922. Superior Turkish cavalry forced the Greeks back; the retreat then turned into a rout, and the Greeks fled to the coast.

In response to the Turkish advance toward Istanbul, a British force landed to protect the straits. Armistice negotiations began shortly thereafter. The Greeks agreed to an armistice on October 11, 1922. The opposing sides opened negotiations in November and signed the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923. Although the Turks agreed to relinquish all prewar non-Turkish territory in the Middle East and lost almost all the offshore islands in the Aegean and the Mediterranean, the Greeks departed Anatolia, the Turks avoided any reparations, and no legal restrictions remained on their government.

The war had seen widespread atrocities committed by Greeks against Turks and by Turks against Greeks and Armenians, and an ensuing population exchange treaty concluded by the two governments saw Greek orthodox citizens of Turkey and Turkish and Greek Muslim citizens residing in Greece subjected to a forced exchange. Some 1.5 million Orthodox Christians from Turkey and 500,000 Turks and Greek Muslims from Greece were uprooted from their homelands.

The last British troops evacuated Istanbul on October 2, and the Republic of Turkey was formally established under the presidency of Kemal on October 29, 1923. Determined to see his country a modern, secular nation, Kemal (known as Atatürk and regarded as the father of modern-day Turkey) immediately embarked on an ambitious reform program. Expanding education was a major priority, with primary education made free and compulsory. Women were accorded equal civil and political rights, and taxation was reformed. Atatürk also pushed a policy of Turkification and sharply limited the influence of Islam. The new Turkey, although much more homogeneous than before, was also far smaller, and its foreign policy centered on preserving the status quo.

Atatürk died in 1938, and Premier İsmet İnönü, his closest associate, took over the leadership of the nation and its one political party, the People's Party. İnönü was reelected president in 1943.

During World War II, Turkey resisted pressure from both sides to join the war. With the consequences of World War I still fresh, Turkish leaders were understandably reluctant to embark on a new conflict, especially as their military was obsolete. Turkey did keep its large army mobilized throughout the conflict, however, worried

by the ambitions not only of Germany and the Soviet Union but also those of Italy. Once the Germans controlled the Balkans, Ankara signed the Treaty of Territorial Integrity and Friendship with Berlin on June 18, 1941. The treaty extended economic concessions to Germany. İnönü strongly resisted pressure by the Germans to enter the war on the Axis side, however.

When the tide of war turned against the Axis, Turkey resumed its general pro-West position, although it also resisted pressure from the United States and Britain to enter the war on their side. Although Turkey declared war on Germany on February 23, 1945, this was to ensure membership in the UN.

Following the war, the Soviet Union applied tremendous pressure on Turkey to secure the two northeastern Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan, both of which had long been in contention between the two countries. Moscow also demanded a share of control over defense of the Turkish Straits. This Soviet pressure on Turkey and the simultaneous communist threat to Greece led to the 1947 U.S. Truman Doctrine and to Turkish membership in NATO in 1952. During the Cold War, Turkey was firmly in the Western camp and sent troops to fight on the UN side in the Korean War (1950–1953).

The Turkish single-party period ended in 1945. During the next decades Turkey experienced a tumultuous transition to multiparty democracy marked by a fragmented party system and unstable governments. With increasing domestic strife, the Turkish military, which regarded itself as the principal defender of the ideals of Atatürk and a secular state, mounted coup d'états in 1960, 1971, and 1980. To their credit, however, each time the army leaders restored the democratic process.

In foreign affairs, ongoing tensions between Turkey and Greece regarding Cyprus almost brought war between the two NATO states. Following a decade of violence in Cyprus and a coup on July 15, 1974, by the Greek EOKA B paramilitary organization that sought enosis (union with Greece), five days later Turkish forces invaded the island. The Turks took additional territory in northern Cyprus, encouraged Turks to migrate there, and set up the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The standoff regarding Cyprus continues, with the Turkish-installed republic recognized only by Turkey itself.

Turkey was a member of the international coalition that expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Although Turkey provided no ground troops, it dispatched two frigates to the Persian Gulf and was heavily involved in basing coalition forces, including air assets. Ankara also allowed overflights of its airspace when the air war began in January. Rigid enforcement of the international economic blockade against Iraq cost Turkey an estimated \$3 billion in revenues, chiefly from shutting down an oil pipeline through the country.

Generally speaking, aside from strong opposition to the creation of a Kurdish state, Turkey maintained a policy of alleged noninvolvement in Middle Eastern affairs for fear of being dragged into one of the region's internecine conflicts, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict. Turkey generally enjoyed cordial diplomatic relations with both Israel and its Arab neighbors. Turkey's involvement in the 1955 Baghdad Pact, pushed by the United States and scorned by Muslim states except for Iraq and Iran, did alienate it from much of the Middle East, especially Egypt. In the

early 1960s, Turkey sought a more evenhanded Middle East policy that meant less cooperation with the United States and greater rapprochement with the Arab states.

An entente developed between Turkey and Israel in the 1990s. Both were Western-oriented states with close ties to the United States, and both sought closer ties with Europe. Leaders in both countries worried about the threats to this posed by terrorism, Islamic radicalism, and perceived hostile regimes in Syria and Iran. Cooperation included trade and tourism but also military cooperation, with Israeli upgrades of Turkish military equipment and the sharing of intelligence. Inhibiting this cooperation was strong public sympathy in Turkey toward the Palestinians.

Turkish-Israeli relations plummeted on May 31, 2010, when Israeli commandos mounted a raid in international waters of the Mediterranean against a flotilla of six ships, carrying humanitarian assistance to Gaza, that had originated in Turkey. Violence flared, and the Israeli commandos killed 10 people in one of the ships. Condemnation of Israel was especially strong in Turkey, which recalled its ambassador from Israel. The 2014 Israel-Gaza War also saw Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan strongly condemn Israel's policies, characterizing them as more "barbaric" than those of Adolf Hitler.

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, Ankara immediately offered its full support. It extended airspace and refueling rights as the U.S.-led coalition began operations against Afghanistan's Taliban regime in October 2001, and the next year Turkey dispatched troops to join the International Security Assistance Force–Afghanistan. The deployment numbered some 1,700 personnel in 2009, but the troops were not engaged in combat operations, and Erdoğan, then Turkish prime minister, resisted pressure from Washington to offer more combat troops in large part because Turkish public opinion was ambivalent about the mission in Afghanistan. Erdoğan initially opposed any NATO military intervention in the 2011 Libyan Civil War, and when Turkey did go along with the operation, its military remained largely on the sidelines. Erdoğan also angered Washington when he engaged the Russians in a series of bilateral commercial and energy agreements to include a major pipeline deal in December 2014. He was also largely silent regarding the Russian seizure of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine.

In recent years, three political parties have vied for power in Turkey. The largest by far is the Justice and Development Party (AKP), followed in order of magnitude by the Republican People's Party and the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). Erdoğan's AKP won a surprise landslide victory in the November 2002 legislative elections, and the charismatic Erdoğan became prime minister in 2003. He held that post until 2014, when he was elected president. Concerns have been raised about the AKP's Islamic-based ideology, but Erdoğan initially focused on economic reform and securing Turkey's entrance into the EU.

Erdoğan did move against the Turkish military, long regarded as the guardian of the secular state, and dramatically purged its leadership. In July 2011, the nation's top four military commanders abruptly resigned to protest the detention of hundreds of military officers on charges of conspiring against the government in 2009. In September 2012, a Turkish court convicted 330 military officers, including the

top former commanders of the army, navy, and air force, of the plot and sentenced them to as much as 20 years in prison. In August 2013, there were additional sentences. Former chief of staff of the army General Ilker Basbug received a life sentence; 3 former members of the Turkish parliament also received prison terms, as did 20 journalists. This purge brought international condemnation regarding judicial fairness and was seen by many as a move to stifle dissent.

Erdoğan also secured constitutional changes in 2010 that served to strengthen his authority. While the Turkish economy has registered solid gains, Erdoğan's Islamic stance and his authoritarianism remain concerns for many secular Turks as well as Western governments.

Erdoğan has also taken a hard line regarding the Kurds. The Kurds live in the mountainous region known as Kurdistan, encompassing southeastern Turkey, eastern Syria, northern Iraq, and western Iran. Kurdistan includes the oil fields in Iraq around Kirkuk and is rich in other natural resources. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims.

Turkey is home to 15 million Kurds, representing nearly half of the world's Kurdish population of 30 million, the world's largest ethnic group without a state. (Some 7 million Kurds live in Iran, 6 million live in Iraq, and 2 million live in Syria.) Statehood appeared on the verge of realization following World War I. Indeed, the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres promised the Kurds autonomy leading to statehood after a plebiscite, but the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 recognized Turkish sovereignty over northern Kurdistan, while the remainder of Kurdish territory fell in Iran and the new states of Iraq and Syria.

Kurdish rebellions occurred in the 1960s and 1970s in Iraq, while Kurds revolted in Iran during the Iranian Revolution of 1979. In 1988, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein ordered military force against the Iraqi Kurds. Conventional attacks and chemical warfare destroyed some 2,000 villages and killed upwards of 180,000 Kurds. The Iraqi Army crushed other Kurdish revolts following the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and also in 1995.

Turkey's Kurds have long claimed discrimination and attempts by the government to eradicate their culture. On November 27, 1978, Abdullah Öcalan established the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK), initially composed largely of students. In addition to stressing Kurdish nationalism, the PKK initially espoused a Marxist ideology.

Almost immediately the PKK was locked in combat with right-wing parties in Turkey and with those Kurdish leaders it accused of collaboration with the government. Beginning in 1984 the PKK commenced an insurgency in southern Turkey, home to most Turkish Kurds. This took the form of attacks and bombings against government institutions and military installations. In the mid-1990s the PKK initiated suicide bombings, the majority of which were carried out by women.

In March 1995 the Turkish Army responded with Operation STEEL CURTAIN, sending 35,000 troops into the Kurdish zone of northern Iraq in an effort to trap several thousand guerrillas and halt PKK cross-border raids. In the late 1990s, Turkey increased pressure on the PKK when an undeclared war between Turkey and Syria ended open Syrian support for the PKK.

In February 1999 Turkish commandos, assisted by U.S. intelligence, seized Öcalan in Kenya. Brought before a Turkish court, he was condemned to death, but this was commuted to life imprisonment as part of negotiations for Turkish membership in the EU. That same month the Turkish Army again invaded northern Iraq to wipe out PKK bases there.

Meanwhile, the Turkish government sought to allay international criticism of its actions by somewhat relaxing legislation directed against the Kurds, including bans on broadcasting and publishing in the Kurdish language. At the same time, the PKK found itself blacklisted in a number of states. Both the United States and the EU characterized the PKK as a terrorist organization.

No reliable casualty figures exist, but the Turkish Army has set the numbers of killed through 1984 at 6,482 Turkish military personnel, 32,000 PKK troops, and 5,560 civilians. The army also claims 14,000 PKK troops taken prisoner. The PKK claims that the Turkish armed forces destroyed some 8,000 Kurdish communities and displaced 3 million to 4 million people.

Kurdish hopes for at least autonomy received a boost from the 2003–2011 Iraq War, when Kurds in northern Iraq all but established their own state, a development long opposed by Ankara, which long feared that if Iraq were to break into separate states, this would mean an independent Kurdish nation that would lay claim to Turkish territory. This was a major factor in Ankara's decision to refuse support for the U.S.-led invasion, despite strong financial incentives offered by Washington. This decision by Ankara denied a secure northern base of operations for the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division and forced a recasting of the coalition's military plans, severely straining relations between the United States and Turkey. The war also saw Ankara accusing Washington of failing to wipe out PKK bases in northern Iraq.

In February 2008, Turkish military forces launched an incursion into northern Iraq again against the PKK. This brief eight-day incursion was preceded by Turkish air strikes against PKK targets beginning in December 2007. Perhaps 550 PKK fighters died in the fighting. Both the Iraqi and U.S. governments voiced their displeasure at the Turkish action.

Talks between the Turkish government and the PKK between 2009 and 2011 in Oslo failed, and in January 2013 the Erdoğan government entered into peace talks with Öcalan, who signaled an immense shift in PKK policy by calling for a cease-fire. A shaky cease-fire ensued in April, and despite isolated attacks thereafter, there was cautious optimism about resolving the conflict. The government demanded disarmament and withdrawal of PKK forces, while the Kurds sought more language and cultural rights within Turkey as well as a degree of autonomy.

On October 13, 2014, however, the Kurds were angered when Turkish aircraft, rather than coming to the relief of Kurds under attack by the Islamic extremist Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) at Kobanî just across the Turkish border with Syria, attacked PKK positions in southeastern Turkey even though the PKK was aligned with the Kurds fighting ISIS in Syria. Then on July 20, 2015, an ISIS suicide bombing killed more than 30 Kurdish activists in the southern Turkish town of Suruc. The PKK blamed the government for not preventing the attack and declared the cease-fire at an end, although Öcalan had not issued such a statement. On

July 22, a PKK-linked car bombing killed 2 Turkish soldiers. In retaliation, Turkey launched air strikes against PKK camps in northern Iraq and ISIS militants in Syria and also rounded up alleged supporters from both groups. On July 28, Erdoğan announced an end to the peace process. This occurred just as the liberal Kurdish-based People's Democratic Party (HDP) was becoming a rising force in Turkey's politics.

On February 17, 2016, a bomb-laden vehicle exploded near the Turkish parliament building in Ankara, targeting military vehicles stopped in traffic. The blast killed 28 people and injured 61 others. The next day Turkish prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu identified the assailant as having links to the People's Protection Units, the military wing of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, a PKK offshoot. The Turkish military retaliated with air strikes in northern Iraq targeting the PKK.

Another blast occurred in Ankara in a busy square on March 13, 2016, killing 37 people and wounding 125. Turkish aircraft then mounted air strikes on what were described as PKK bases in northern Iraq, although subsequently the Kurdish Freedom Falcons, another PKK offshoot, claimed responsibility. Despite all this, Turkey imported oil from the Kurdish region of northern Iraq.

Erdoğan now found himself engaged on three separate fronts not only against the militant Kurds and ISIS but also the Syrian regime president of Bashar al-Assad. Washington and Ankara often seemed at odds on policy decisions regarding Syria, however. Thus, Erdoğan extended aid to antigovernment rebels in the Syrian Civil War that began in 2011 without coordinating with Washington, which failed to support his calls for the imposition of a no-fly zone over portions of Syria. In 2012 Turkey joined Saudi Arabia and Qatar in establishing a center in Adana in southeastern Turkey to assist the rebel Free Syrian Army in its fight with Syrian government forces. In 2013, 2014, and 2015, Turkey shot down Syrian military aircraft that it claimed had violated its airspace.

In the early fall of 2014, Washington sought permission to use Turkey's Incirlik Air Base as a staging area for its aircraft attacking ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria. Erdoğan said that he would accede to the request only after Assad had been removed from power, a stance that angered Washington and may have cost Turkey a seat on the UN Security Council. On October 12, 2014, however, Erdoğan relented and permitted U.S. and other coalition forces some basing rights. On February 19, 2015, Turkey and the United States signed an agreement to train and arm Syrian rebels at a base in Kirsehir, Turkey.

Although the Turkish government had long been reluctant to attack ISIS, on August 24, 2015, a day after ISIS militants fired on a Turkish border outpost, Turkish aircraft attacked ISIS targets in Syria. Ankara also announced that it would allow U.S.-led coalition forces to base manned and unmanned aircraft at its air bases for operations against ISIS and that Turkey's military would take part in the operations. This meant far shorter distances for U.S. aircraft to travel in order to strike ISIS targets. On August 28, the Turkish Air Force carried out its first air strikes as part of the coalition against ISIS.

On the morning of October 10 two powerful bombs exploded near the main train station in Ankara, targeting a peace rally. In this deadliest terrorist attack in modern Turkish history, 103 people were killed and some 400 others were injured.

The explosions occurred during a gathering of some 14,000 people for a peace march at noon. The demonstrators included members of the Kurdish-based HDP, with the demonstrators calling for an end to the renewed conflict between the government and the PKK.

Critics charged that this attack impacted the national elections, held only three weeks later, for on November 1, 2015, Erdoğan's AKP won a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections, regaining the parliamentary majority it had lost five months earlier in the June 2015 general election. The results of this snap election called in August came as a surprise, with critics charging that government attacks on independent media and journalists by AKP supporters all but silenced the opposition. The election took place amid security concerns following the collapse of cease-fire negotiations with the PKK in July, resulting in a renewal of the Kurdish separatist conflict in which nearly 150 security personnel had lost their lives. Critics accused the government of deliberately sparking the conflict with the Kurds in order to win back votes it had lost to the MHP in June and decrease the turnout in the areas of the rising Kurdish HDP.

On November 24, 2015, Turkish fighters shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 bomber. The Turks claimed that it had violated their airspace and that the Russian pilot had been warned. The Russians denied this. Washington supported Ankara's version. Russian president Vladimir Putin said the shoot-down would have "serious consequences." Russia then deployed S-400 antiaircraft missiles to its Hmeymim air base in Syria. These missiles have a range of some 155 miles, and the Turkish border is less than 30 miles distant. Putin also imposed economic sanctions on Turkey, including a ban on tourist travel there.

Terrorism continued to be a major threat in Turkey. Seeking to answer complaints by foreign governments that it was not doing enough to prevent ISIS access to its territory and the transit of recruits from Turkey to Syria, Turkey began a crack-down on ISIS. On January 12, 2016, an explosion rocked Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, killing at least 10 people (8 of them Germans) and wounding 15 others. ISIS claimed responsibility. Then on March 19 a suicide bomber, reportedly also linked to ISIS, killed 4 people and wounded at least 36 others in a busy Istanbul shopping district. The dead included 2 Israelis and 2 Americans. Erdoğan continues his efforts to concentrate power in his own hands and crack down on press freedoms and critics of his government. He is also actively seeking a new constitution that would give the president ultimate authority. In May 2016 Erdoğan forced out his handpicked premier, Davutoglu, reportedly because he was upset over the international attention Davutoglu had received in negotiating a pact regarding the numerous refugees from Syria and other Middle Eastern trouble spots making their way through Turkey to other European nations.

In late June, Turkey reestablished diplomatic relations with both the Soviet Union and Israel. Then on June 28, three suicide bombers armed with automatic weapons and wearing suicide vests attacked Ataturk International Airport, Europe's third-busiest airport, in Istanbul, killing 42 people and wounding 239. The government blamed ISIS, which had called for such attacks during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Many Turks resent the phobia expressed by many Americans and West Europeans toward their country's Muslim identity and what they perceive as a lack of support for Ankara's efforts to stamp out the Kurdish threat. Certainly Turkey continues to cast a watchful eye on the future of Iraq and Syria. Because Turkey is so important geopolitically, the rest of the world will watch it as well.

Timeline

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| 1853–1856 | The Crimean War occurs, with Britain, France, and Sardinia-Piedmont supporting the Ottoman Empire against Russian territorial aspirations. |
| 1877–1878 | In the Russo-Turkish War, Russia allies with the Ottoman principalities of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro to defeat Ottoman forces. Russia gains territory in the Caucasus, the principalities become independent, and Bulgaria becomes a principality. Austria-Hungary is allowed to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Great Britain secures Cyprus. |
| 1908 | Turkish reformers of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), part of the Young Turk movement, convince Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) to restore the parliament. |
| Apr 27, 1909 | The CUP deposes Sultan Abdul Hamid II and replaces him with his younger brother, Mehmed V. |
| Sep 29, 1911 | Italy declares war on the Ottoman Empire to secure Tripoli (present-day Libya). |
| Oct 8, 1912 | Encouraged by the Italian success, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece begin the First Balkan War in order to secure Ottoman territory in Europe. |
| Oct 18, 1912 | In the Treaty of Lausanne, Italy secures sovereignty over Libya. |
| Oct 28–Nov 3, 1912 | The Bulgarians defeat the Ottomans in the Battle of Lulé Burgas. |
| Nov 16–18, 1912 | The Serbs defeat the Ottomans in the Battle of Monastir (Bitola). |
| Jan 23, 1913 | With Sultan Mehmed V discredited by the steady stream of Ottoman military reverses, the CUP mounts a coup d'état. |
| May 30, 1913 | The Treaty of London ends the First Balkan War. The Ottoman Empire cedes the vast majority of its territory in Europe. |
| Jun 29, 1913 | The Second Balkan War begins when the victors in the First Balkan War begin quarreling among themselves. The war pits Greece, Serbia, Romania, Montenegro, and the Ottoman Empire against Bulgaria, the chief territorial beneficiary in the first conflict. |

- Aug 10, 2013 The Treaty of Bucharest brings to an end the Second Balkan War. Bulgaria loses considerable territory to Greece and Serbia, and the Ottoman Empire recovers Adrianople.
- Dec 1913 A German military mission arrives in Istanbul to help reorganize the Ottoman Army.
- Aug 2, 1914 Ottoman leaders sign a secret alliance with Germany and the next day mobilize their military.
- Oct 28, 1914 The former German battle cruiser *Goeben* and destroyer *Breslau*, given to Turkey but still under German command, attack Russian ports and shipping in the Black Sea.
- Nov 4, 1914 Russia declares war on the Ottoman Empire.
- Nov 14, 1914 Mehmed V proclaims jihad (holy war) against the Entente powers.
- Dec 17, 1914 The Turkish Third Army commences offensive operations against the Russians in Caucasia.
- Dec 22, 1914–
Jan 17, 1915 The Turkish Third Army suffers a major defeat at the hands of the Russians in the Battle of Sariklamish.
- Apr 1915 The Ottoman First and Third Armies contain the Entente landing at Gallipoli.
- Apr 1915–1917 Some 1.5 million Armenians perish in the forced desert relocation known as the Armenian Massacre and, controversially, as the Armenian Genocide.
- Apr 29, 1916 The Ottomans secure a major military victory at Kut in Mesopotamia when an entire Indian Army division surrenders to the Ottoman Sixth Army.
- 1917–1918 Aided by the British, Arabs of the Hejaz revolt against the Ottomans, greatly aiding British military efforts.
- Oct 30, 1918 The Armistice of Mudros ends Ottoman participation in World War I.
- Nov 15, 1918 The Ottoman Empire unofficially ends when Sultan Mehmed VI establishes a new government controlled by Greek and British troops. Considerable numbers of Allied troops then arrive. Turkish nationalists in eastern Anatolia, led by Generals Mustafa Kemal and Kazim Karabekir, affirm the unity of Turkish territory and deny that the Allies have occupation rights. The nationalists secure some aid from Bolshevik Russia.
- May 15, 1919 Greek forces occupy Smyrna (Izmir).
- May 19, 1919 Beginning of the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923). Turkish nationalist forces resist the Greeks on the Western Front.

- In the east, fighting occurs between the Turkish nationalists and the Armenians.
- Sep 4–11, 1919 An assembly of representatives of the Turkish National Movement from all the Anatolia provinces meet at Sivas in east-central Turkey.
- Mar 16, 1920 British troops seize government buildings in Istanbul and set up a pro-Allied cabinet.
- Jun 22, 1920 Greek forces advance from Smyrna to help enforce the terms of the impending peace treaty with the empire and soon seize the major cities in western Anatolia and Adrianople in Thrace. In the east an Armenian attack collapses near Erzurum, and the Turks then force the Armenians to sue for peace, reducing Armenia to the province of Erivan.
- Aug 10, 1920 The Ottoman government is forced to sign the punitive Treaty of Sèvres, which limits Ottoman control largely to Anatolia.
- Mar 16, 1921 Turkish nationalists sign a treaty with Bolshevik Russia delimiting the border in the east and securing additional military assistance.
- Mar 23, 1921 The Greeks open an offensive toward Ankara.
- Aug 23–Sep 16, 1921 The Turks are successful in a series of engagements known as the Battle of the Sakarya across a 120-mile front.
- Aug 18, 1922 British efforts to negotiate an end to the war through a partial revision of the Treaty of Sèvres having failed, the Turks take the offensive, routing the Greeks and driving them back to the coast.
- Oct 11, 1922 An armistice is concluded, and peace talks open in November.
- Jul 24, 1923 The Treaty of Lausanne brings to an end the Greco-Turkish War. Although the Turks agree to relinquish all prewar non-Turkish territory in the Middle East and lose almost all the offshore islands in the Aegean and the Mediterranean, the Greeks depart Anatolia, no reparations are paid, and there are no legal restrictions on the Turkish government.
- Oct 29, 1923 The Republic of Turkey is formally established under the presidency of Mustafa Kemal, known as Kemal Atatürk. Determined to make his country a modern, secular state, Atatürk embarks on an ambitious reform program.
- Jun 18, 1941 The consequences of World War I still fresh, Turkey resists pressure from both sides to join World War II. With the Germans controlling the Balkans, however, the Turks sign a treaty with Berlin granting Germany economic concessions.
- Feb 23, 1945 Turkey declares war on Germany in order to secure membership in the United Nations.

- Mar 12, 1947 With the Soviet Union applying tremendous pressure on Turkey to secure the two northeastern Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan and demanding a share of control over defense of the Turkish Straits, U.S. president Harry S. Truman issues what becomes known as the Truman Doctrine, which brings aid to both Turkey and Greece.
- 1950–1953 Turkish force participate in the Korean War as part of the United Nations Command.
- Feb 18, 1952 Turkey joins the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
- 1955–1979 Turkey is a member of the U.S.-sponsored Baghdad Pact.
- May 27, 1960 Turkish Army officers seize power in a coup d'état but restore the administrative process to civilians in October 1961.
- Mar 12, 1971 Amid worsening domestic strife, the Turkish Army again takes power in a coup d'état but relinquishes it in 1973.
- Jul 20, 1974 Heightened tensions between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus almost bring war. A coup d'état on the island on July 15, 1974, by Greeks bent on securing the union of Cyprus with Greece brings a Turkish military invasion of Cyprus on this date and a subsequent land grab and proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The standoff on Cyprus continues.
- Nov 27, 1978 Abdullah Öcalan establishes the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK). Espousing a Marxist ideology, the PKK seeks an end to constraints on Kurdish culture and supports Kurdish autonomy.
- Sep 12, 1980 The Turkish Army again seizes power but restores democratic rule three years later.
- 1984 The PKK commences an insurgency in southern Turkey, attacking Turkish government institutions and military installations.
- Mid-1990s The PKK initiates a series of suicide bombings, a majority of which are carried out by women.
- Aug 1990–Feb 1991 Turkey is a member of the international coalition that expels Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the Persian Gulf War.
- Mar 1995 In Operation STEEL CURTAIN, the Turkish Army sends 35,000 troops into the Kurdish zone of northern Iraq in an effort to trap guerrillas and halt PKK cross-border raids from Iraq.
- Feb 15, 1999 Turkish commandos seize PKK leader Öcalan in Kenya. Brought to trial, he is condemned to death, but widespread demonstrations and international pressure lead to the sentence being commuted to life imprisonment.

- Oct 2001 Following the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, Ankara extends airspace and refueling rights for the U.S.-led coalition operating against Afghanistan's Taliban regime in October 2001 and the next year sends troops to join the International Security Assistance Force–Afghanistan.
- Feb 2008 Turkish forces mount an incursion into northern Iraq. Perhaps 550 PPK fighters are killed in the fighting.
- 2009–2011 Peace talks take place in Oslo between the Turkish government and the PKK but are unsuccessful.
- 2011–2013 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, founder and leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and prime minister of Turkey during 2003–2014, purges the Turkish military leadership. Hundreds of military officers are accused of conspiring against the government and are sentenced to prison, as are some members of parliament and journalists.
- Mar 15, 2011 Beginning of the Syrian Civil War, with the government of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad seeking to crush a movement demanding political change. The Turkish government aligns itself squarely against Assad and calls for his removal.
- Jan 2013 The Turkish government enters into peace talks with Öcalan, and the PKK leader calls for a cease-fire, which ensues in April.
- Aug 28, 2014 Erdoğan assumes office as president of Turkey.
- Oct 12, 2014 Erdoğan agrees to grant U.S. and other coalition forces aircraft basing rights in southern Turkey to attack Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) targets.
- Feb 19, 2015 Turkey and the United States sign an agreement to train and arm a limited number of Syrian rebels at a base in Kirsehir, Turkey.
- Jul 20, 2015 An ISIS suicide bombing kills more than 30 Kurdish activists in the southern Turkish town of Suruc. The PKK blames the government for not preventing the attack and, coupled with the failure of the Turkish government to aid Kurds fighting ISIS at Kobani just across the border in Syria, declares the cease-fire at an end.
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- Aug 28, 2015 The Turkish Air Force carries out its first air strikes as part of the coalition against ISIS in Syria.

- Oct 10, 2015 Two powerful bombs explode near the main train station in Ankara, targeting a peace rally. In the deadliest terrorist attack in Turkish history, 103 people are killed, and some 400 others are injured. The explosions occur during a gathering of some 14,000 people for a peace march at noon. The demonstrators include members of the Kurdish-based People's Democratic Party, with the demonstrators calling for an end to the renewed conflict between the government and the PKK.
- Nov 1, 2015 Erdoğan's AKP wins a landslide victory in national parliamentary elections, regaining the parliamentary majority it had lost five months earlier in the June 2015 general election.
- Nov 24, 2015 Turkish fighters shoot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 bomber that the government claims had violated Turkish airspace. (The Turks had previously downed several Syrian aircraft in similar circumstances.) The two crewmen eject safely but are captured, and one is killed on the ground by Turkmen fighting the Syrian government (the other is rescued). Accusing the Turks of a deliberate provocation, Russian president Vladimir Putin sends anti-aircraft missiles to a Russian base in Syria and institutes economic retaliation against Turkey.
- Jan 12, 2016 An explosion in Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul kills at least 10 people (8 of them Germans) and wounds 15 others. ISIS claims responsibility.
- Feb 17, 2016 A car bomb explodes in Ankara, killing 28 people and injuring 61 others. The blast is linked to the People's Protection Units, the military wing of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, a PKK offshoot. The Turkish military retaliates with air strikes in northern Iraq targeting the PKK.
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- Jun 29, 2016 Three suicide bombers with automatic weapons and explosive vests attack Istanbul Ataturk Airport, killing 42 people and wounding 239. The government blames ISIS, which had called for such attacks during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

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