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THE U.S. ARMS SALES AND FOREIGN POLICY: TURKİYE'S AND GREECE'S FIGHTERS CASE

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Abstract

The United States (U.S.) is the largest exporter of weaponry worldwide. The U.S. arms sales can be used as a lens to analyze its foreign and security policy in international relations. The U.S. does not favor using arms exports solely to maximize financial gain. The U.S. approved Greece's modernization of F-16 warplanes, which could change the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, but Türkiye's similar request for the same was not accepted. The U.S. has also ratified the sale of F-35 warplanes to Greece, an offensive air weapon that is invisible to radar. This article examines US arms sales and restrictions to numerous states, including Türkiye and Greece, as a case study comparing the modernization of F-16 aircraft and F-35 arms sales from 2009 to 2024. We get all the needed data from the U.S. Security Defense Cooperation institution's official website. Türkiye is a NATO member and the U.S.' refusal to give it F-35 warfighters and its protracted denial of Türkiye's request to upgrade its F-16 aircraft raise serious questions about NATO's capacity to protect Türkiye, and ambiguity in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

Keywords: The U.S., Türkiye, Greece, F-35, F-16

JEL Codes: F51, F52

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INTRODUCTION

Uncertainty has existed regarding the threat that prompted Türkiye to purchase S-400 air defense systems from Russia. However, even though Türkiye is a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member, its acquisition of this weapon led to a significant amount of mistrust in its relationship with the United States (U.S.), ultimately resulting in its withdrawal from the F-35 warplane program. Additionally, despite Türkiye's request for the U.S. to modernize its current F-16 fleet, it faced numerous challenges in the U.S. Congress (Insinna v.d., 2020).

The American sales of fighter planes and other weapons to Türkiye have gained significant attention since Türkiye's 2019 purchase of the S-400 and subsequent exclusion from the F-35 program (Congressional Research Service, 2024). Considering that the defense industry and arms sales are tangible examples of foreign policy that could impact regional security, every proposed transfer that the U.S. reviews is thoroughly examined on an individual basis and approved if it is found to further American national security and foreign policy objectives (U.S. Department of State, 2021). LTG Hooper, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) Director claims that the U.S. also fortifies its alliances by selling the world's most sophisticated defense systems (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2018).

According to Schanzer, from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, "the F-35 club is actually for trustworthy allies." (Phillips, 2025). The fact that Türkiye, another NATO member, was not granted the chance to interoperate with the U.S. is highly provocative. Given that Greece's neighbors are all NATO nations, it is unclear what threats the country faces now and in the future. Erdogan informed Trump in March 2025 that completing the F-16 purchase process and reintegrating Türkiye into the F-35 program were essential to enhancing bilateral defense cooperation, as is lifting CAATSA penalties (Guldogan, 2025). If an arrangement can be reached that makes Türkiye's Russian S-400 system unusable, Trump has stated his intention to assist in completing the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye and is amenable to selling Türkiye its most desired objective, F-35 fighters (Phillips, 2025). Greece and Israel intervened to stop this following Trump's remarks about the F-35 and F-16 toward Türkiye. Citing worries about Ankara's increasing influence in Syria, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been urging US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to halt the supply of F-35 fighter jets to Türkiye (IFP, 2025). Netanyahu stated that the US should not sell the F-35 to Türkiye (Berman, 2025). In the wake of news that President Trump is considering easing sanctions, which may reintegrate Türkiye into the program, Greek-American organizations are stepping up their efforts to prevent the transfer of sophisticated F-35 fighters to Türkiye (Kokkinidis, 2025). As Israel's relationship with Türkiye continues to deteriorate, the bilateral ties between Greece and Israel have

significantly improved in recent years. Furthermore, Israel, Greece, and Cyprus intend to build the EastMed gas pipeline, connecting Israeli and Cypriot offshore natural gas reserves (Shapiro, 2024).

This article examines US arms sales and restrictions to numerous states, including Türkiye, as a case study comparing the modernization of F-16 and F-35 arms sales from 2009 to 2024. We get all the needed data from the U.S. Security Defense Cooperation institution's official website. The study's uniqueness and innovation lie in the comparative findings that provide light on the reasons for the prohibitions placed on Türkiye by examining US arms sales using the F-35 and F-16 fighter jet cases.

THEORY

According to the neo-realist approach, decisions regarding arms trade in American foreign policy are determined by national security interests, whereas the neo-liberal contends that the White House makes choices regarding arms sales based on the protection of human rights and democracy (Coban and Özcan, 2019, pp. 371-372). As Walt states in “International Relations: One World, Many Theories”, just as it is difficult to develop sound theories without having a thorough understanding of the real world, it is also difficult to create sound policies if one's fundamental organizing principles are faulty (Walt, 1998:29). Therefore, we will analyze US arms sales based on real data in light of neorealism theory. I would like to paraphrase Walt's statement, "One World, many theories” as there are also many sub-schools of neorealism.

States can develop their armed forces for security, aggression, or both. Still, when rival nations have forces capable of offensive action, there are frequently strong incentives to launch the first attack if a political crisis escalates the likelihood of war (Posen, 1991, p.218). In anarchy, a state's best chance of surviving is to exploit other states and seize power at their expense (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.36). Defensive realism departs from offensive realism's rigid emphasis on power dynamics and contends that the offense-defense balance substantially impacts the level of insecurity that states experience (Montgomery, 2006, p.156). While some studies (Schweller, 1997, p.928) found that "bandwagoning" was relatively uncommon and that states primarily formed alliances to balance against the most powerful state, other studies also found that states balanced against various threats, not just power considerations (Walt, 1988, p.277). Therefore, the balance-of-threat theory function is impacted by factors such as offensive capability, geographic proximity, power, and offensive objectives attributes (Walt, 1985, p.9). The balance-of-threat theory explicitly integrates offensive capabilities, intentions, and power with geography under the umbrella of threat (Walt, 1988, p.933). According to Schweller, bandwagoning has been defined too narrowly—as caving into threats—and has ignored opportunities (Schweller, 1994, p.75). A strong revisionist state or

coalition draws opportunistic revisionist powers, much like a lion attracts jackals (jackal bandwagoning) (Schweller, 1994, p.93).

The degree of common threat and regional balances of capabilities determine whether the patrons choose to equip their client states, create alliances, or do both (Yarhi-Milo, 2016, p.90). The arms transfer may indicate a patron's intentions, and offensive weapons reflect stronger signals (Yarhi-Milo, 2016, pp.95-96). The U.S. has accessed military installations in countries like Greece by selling weapons (Thrall and Dorminey, 2018, p.10). Since 2006, Lebanon, Iran, Syria, Libya, and Egypt have all been subject to an arms embargo imposed by the European Union (SIPRI). In addition, the European Union (EU) works with the U.S. on arms embargoes and restrictions. U.S. Secretary of Defense stated this era as a great power competition era, and China as a near-peer rival (Esper, 2020). Given its strategic and economic significance—the Indo-Pacific is home to six nuclear-armed states and seven of the world's top ten standing armies—the U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS) names the Indo-Pacific the Department of Defense's priority theater. Additionally, over half of all international maritime trade passes through Asia, and the region alone accounts for 60% of the global GDP (Esper, 2020). American Foreign Military Sales (FMS) projects totaling more than $160 billion are underway in the Indo-Pacific region, including $22 billion in newly initiated projects annually. This represents about half of all foreign military sales worldwide. For instance, Taiwan receives F-16 fighter jets and M1 Abrams tanks from the U.S., Japan receives F-35 aircraft, and India gets Seahawk and Apache helicopters (Esper, 2020).

The case analysis approach is used to evaluate the following: the countries to which the F-35 and F-16 fighters are sold, the official website of the United States, where it discloses its arms sales, and the reasons behind these sales. Following that, the results are displayed in tables. Although Turkiyr is a member of NATO, it is not included in any of the United States' warplane programs. This study uses a unique and comparable method to determine the aircraft sales to non-NATO countries and even neutral states. This paper also examines the reasons for this discrepancy and its potential implications for the security architecture of the Balkans.

THE US ARMS SALES

The president, with the primary role established by the Constitution, is the most crucial branch of government, and this must be acknowledged at the outset of US foreign and defense policymaking (Lindsay and Ripley, 1994:9). American foreign and defense policies fall into three main categories: structural, strategic, and crisis. Strategic policy outlines the objectives and strategies of defense and foreign policy, crisis policy is characterized by an imminent threat to US national interests, and structural policy controls the allocation of resources and most closely resembles domestic policy decision-making (Lindsay and

Ripley, 1994, p.10). In the case of U.S. v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation, the Supreme Court firmly maintained the executive branch in foreign affairs by ruling that With the Senate's advice and approval, the President is the only one with the power to listen or speak on behalf of the country and negotiate treaties; the Senate cannot interfere (Tower, 1981, pp.231-232). There is a Turkish Case in which American President Ford stated that Congress was "very, very reluctant" to impose an arms embargo on Türkiye on 17 October 1974. After the House rejected a motion to lift the blockade in 1975, Türkiye declared two days later that it would close all American bases and posts on its soil (Tower, 1981, pp.231-237).

The U.S. government uses 15 categories to regulate the export of all weapons, which are divided into three main classes. Major Conventional Weapons (MCW) classes include ships, fighter planes, and missiles. To acquire MCWs, a nation must first submit a request to the State Department or Pentagon, which collaborate to evaluate potential buyers' political and strategic ramifications (Thrall et al, 2020, p.104). Before selling major weapon systems or services to other governments, the president must inform Congress because transfers of U.S. military equipment to other governments require approval from Congress. A joint resolution from Congress may halt a sale, but if the president feels that a national security emergency exists, they may sometimes circumvent the congressional review process. For instance, President Biden has used this exception process for Israel and Ukraine (Masters and Merrow, 2024).

The U.S. and Israel’s commitment to regional security, as well as joint military exercises, research, and weaponry development, demonstrates their solidarity (U.S. Department of State, 2023). According to the U.S. Department of Defense's most recent NDS, published in 2022, they have a long history of strong missile defense cooperation (U.S. Department of Defense, 2022, p.11). A few restrictions and limitations imposed by the U.S. on particular nations are listed (Congressional Research Service, 2023).

U.S. Bases and Arms Sales

Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou warned in 1983 U.S. President Reagan that if the Reagan administration moved forward with plans to more than double economic and military aid to Türkiye without increasing aid levels for Greece, it would jeopardize the chances of agreeing on the future of U.S. military bases on Greek soil (Ierodiaconou, 1983). Papandreou's letter was a response to Reagan's 1983–1984 budget figures, so while the budget projects $282 million in military aid for Greece, it calls for $759 million in military aid and $175 million in economic assistance to Türkiye, more than twice the $403 million total from the previous year, and this would widen the gap the ratio of U.S. military aid for Greece and Türkiye at 4 to 10 instead of 7 to 10 (Ierodiaconou, 1983). In a declassified American Army intelligence report, it is stated that the main factor influencing Greece and Türkiye is external military aid, and U.S. FMS arms sales

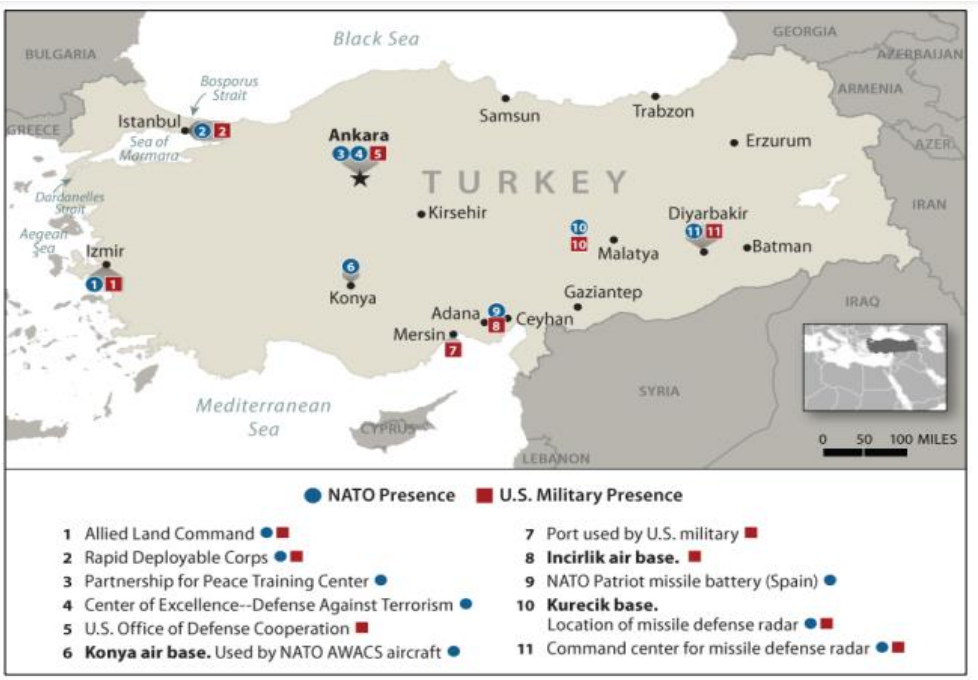
have primarily maintained the Aegean Sea's military balance based on a 7 to 10 ratio (U.S. Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center, 1987).

From 1975 to 1978, the U.S. Congress imposed an arms embargo on Türkiye. The U.S. hasn't employed the diplomatic tactic of freezing arms sales against Türkiye since 1978, till 2018 after Türkiye decided to buy the S-400 air defense missiles from Russia in September 2017 (Insinna et.al.,2020). Several planned U.S. arms transfers to Türkiye have either stalled or reportedly been put on hold by Congress during the last 15 years. Under the Trump administration, Türkiye was expelled from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program and imposed sanctions approved by Congress after Türkiye's S-400 purchase, based on an Act forbidding the transfer of F-35s to Türkiye unless Türkiye forfeits its S-400. (Congressional Research Service, 2023).

Türkiye's estimated $20 billion in informal notification from the U.S. is reportedly for 40 new F-16s with the cutting-edge Block 70/72 Viper (V) configuration for 79 current F-16s (Congressional Research Service, 2023). In response to inquiries on the Turkish F-16 upgrading deal, representatives of Lockheed Martin stated that "the U.S. government should be contacted for any inquiries about the F-16 issue" (Insinna et.al.,2020). Officially, the Biden Administration informed Congress of a potential $23 billion FMS for 79 F-16 modernization packages to V-Configuration and 40 new F-16s (Congressional Research Service, 2024). The Administration announced the same day that 40 F-35 aircraft could be sent to Greece for a potential $8.6 billion FMS. (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2024).

Türkiye fulfilled its responsibilities as a member of NATO against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. However, disputes over the actions of Iran, Iraq, and Syria following the Cold War led to significant instability in relations with the U.S. NATO's expansion has given the U.S. land access to Russia through Ukraine, bypassing Türkiye, thanks to the opening of military bases and facilities in Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania. Given the current NATO and US bases and facilities in Türkiye, it can be argued that the deployment is primarily positioned to counter Iran, the Middle East, and Türkiye. Questions have also been raised about the bases and facilities in Türkiye due to the American growing ties with Greece and Greek Cyprus. Concerns about Türkiye may be linked to increased or possibly increased U.S. military presence in nations like Greece, Cyprus, and Jordan (Congressional Research Service, 2024). In Türkiye, the AN/TPY-2 radar is part of the European Phase Adaptive Approach (EPAA) (U.S. Department of Defense, 2022, p.11).

Figure 1: NATO and the U.S. military presence in Türkiye



Source: Congressional Research Service

The U.S. Arms Sales to Türkiye

Since World War II, the U.S. has formally considered military assistance and arms transfer programs essential foreign policy instruments (Krause, 1991, p.314). The U.S., the largest arms supplier in the world, increased its arms exports by 17% between 2014–18 and 2019–23 (Wezeman et.al, 2024). U.S. security cooperation and arms transfer programs were $80.9 billion in 2023, with an additional $14.68 billion allocated to programs for building partner capacity and the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (Todd, 2024). The annual amount of U.S. arms exports since 2002 has fluctuated between $15 and $75 billion, or up to 4 to 5 percent of all U.S. exports, and almost two million people are employed in the civilian defense sector (Thrall et.al, 2020, p.106).

The U.S. employs arms sales as a means of influencing global power dynamics. Despite its NATO membership, Türkiye was subject to the US arms embargo following the Cyprus Peace Operation. Türkiye has been kicked out of the F-35 aircraft program because it bought S-400 weapons from Russia. The U.S. approved Greece's modernization of F-16 warplanes, which could alter the balance in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, but Türkiye's request for the same was met with hostility (Defea, 2019). The U.S. has also ratified the sale of F-35 warplanes to Greece, an invisible offensive air weapon against radar. The

U.S. arms sales can be used as a lens to analyze its foreign and security policy toward states. This article examines US arms sales and restrictions to numerous states, including Türkiye, as a case study comparing the modernization of F-16 aircraft and F-35 arms sales from 2009 to 2024.

The YPG (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*- The People's Defense/Protection) Units is a non-state actor established with links to the PKK terrorist organization and that has cooperated with the U.S. against ISIS in the Syrian civil war. Regarding the YPG in Syria, the U.S. and Türkiye take distinct stances. The U.S. refers to the YPG as a partner, whereas Türkiye views it as a terrorist organization. We assess that the U.S. press release about Egypt's request for arms purchase from the Middle East Region, which authorizes arms aid, contains significant findings before looking at the matter of American foreign arms sales to Türkiye. The proposed sale will take advantage of Egypt's and the U.S. shared interest in combating terrorist activities in North Sinai that endanger regional stability and security (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2024). The statement claims that the sale of these weapons will advance American foreign and national security interests. Additionally, it is said that these weapons align with Egypt's and the U.S. shared interests in the fight against terrorism. The fact that Türkiye and the U.S. have different approaches to counterterrorism in Syria demonstrates that they do not share a common understanding of security. Along with the Egyptian example, the December 2024 press release allowing Greece, a NATO member and Türkiye's neighbor, to purchase weapons also yielded significant findings (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2024). According to the release, the proposed sale will improve European security, supporting U.S. foreign policy and national security. Along with supporting coalition operations and enhancing interoperability with the US, the planned sale will assist Greece in more effectively thwarting current and potential dangers (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2024).

Table 1 shows the most significant sales in terms of cost: Patriot air defense systems, valued at $3 billion in 2018, and Chinehook helicopters, valued at $9 billion in 2009. The $3 billion cancellation of Patriot air defense systems in 2018 is a significant finding in the negative aspect of the security dimension of bilateral relations.

Table 1: Some FMS and DCS sales to Türkiye

Year	Weapon Type	Type	Price(1000) USD (million)
2009	CH-47 F Chinook Helicopters	FMS	9.000.000
2009	Patriot Advanced Capability-3 Guided Missiles	FMS	9.000.000
2011	AH-1 W Super Cobra Attack Helicopters	FMS	111.000
2012	AIM-9X-2 Sidewinder Missiles	FMS	140.000
2014	AIM-120C-7	FMS	490.000
2014	MK 48 Torpedoes	FMS	490.000
2017	Machine guns and barrels	DCS	454.785
2018	Patriot Missile System (Cancelled)[2]	FMS	3.500.000

Source: Center for International Policy

SPECIFIC CASE: F-16 UPGRADE AND F-35 ARMS SALES

Given the issues between the U.S. and Türkiye over the modernization of F-16s and F-35 warplanes, comparing these two cases since 2009 is thought to yield significant findings. Sales of American F-16 upgrades since 2009 are analyzed, just before the worsening of ties between Israel and Türkiye in 2010. We get all the needed data on the DSCA's official website (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2009-2024).

F-16 Upgrade Case

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) is responsible for U.S. arms sales to foreign states. We examined press releases from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency's official website about the modernization of F-16 warplanes to F-16 V since 2009. Three F-16 V modernization requests were approved. The State Department decided to authorize a possible sale of Moroccan military hardware abroad for the estimated $985.2 million cost of upgrading its current 23 F-16 aircraft to the F-16Vs and associated equipment (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2019). The press release claims that the proposed sale will support US foreign policy and national security by enhancing the security of a significant non-NATO ally that remains a driving instrument for political stability in North Africa (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2019). The Department has approved a possible foreign military sale to the Bahraini government to upgrade F-16 Block 40s to F-16Vs, valued at an estimated $1.082 billion. (Defense Security Cooperation

[2] The Trump administration withdrew its offer Patriot missile system offfer toTürkiye in retaliation for Türkiye's receipt of S-400 missiles (CNN,2019). The U.S. State Department had approved a possible Foreign Military Sale to Türkiye of eighty (80) Patriot MIM-104E Missiles and related equipment for an estimated cost of $3.5 billion USD in December 2018 with DSCA Transmittal No. 18-17.

Agency, 2017). The fundamental military balance in the region won't be impacted by this proposed sale (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2017).

Greece has expressed interest in upgrading its current fleet of F-16s to an F-16 Block Vs, which would include up to 125 APG-83 Radars (with two spares); and 123 Modular Computers. The State Department has approved Greece's potential foreign military purchase of F-16s to upgrade to F-16 Block Vs, and the estimated sale cost is $2.4 billion (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2017). By enhancing a NATO ally's security –a vital partner for European political stability and security, this proposed transaction will advance American foreign policy and national security goals. "The Hellenic Air Force's" capacity to support NATO and maintain interoperability with the U.S. will be strengthened by converting F-16s to an F-16 Block Vs (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2017). Greece will use this capability to conduct counterterrorism operations (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2017). Although the American motivations for Greece's NATO membership and interoperability should also apply to Türkiye, there is no logical justification within the NATO Alliance's purview for taking a hostile stance toward Türkiye on this matter.

Moreover, Bahrain and Morocco are not NATO members; their similar requests were also granted. According to the statement issued for Bahrain, the modernization of F-16s will not change regional power dynamics. The region's air power balance is altered by the acceptance of Greece's request to modernize its F-16 and the rejection of Türkiye's similar request. Furthermore, although the statement about Greece states that F-16 modernization will help it fight terrorism, Greece does not have a terrorism problem. Türkiye has been fighting the PKK, which NATO also has designated as a terrorist organization. There is no logical reason to approach Türkiye negatively for its F-16 Modernization request. After analyzing these findings, it is determined that the Amrican failure to provide Türkiye, a NATO member and combatant of the PKK terrorist group, with a favorable response to its request for F-16 modernization does not align with the principles of the NATO Alliance.

F-35 Case

The U.S. and eight partner nations collaborate to produce the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. For major defense article programs, U.S. defense manufacturers collaborate internationally with countries that are members of NATO, in addition to Australia, Japan, and/or Sweden (not a NATO member at that time) (Congressional Research Service, 2023). We examined press releases about the modernization of F-35 fighters from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency's official website. Table 1 displays related findings.

Table 2: F-35 Fighter sale approval

State	Year	Quantity	Reference
Japan	2012	42	DSCA transmittal no:12-15
	2020	105	DSCA transmittal no:20-18
Korea	2013	60	DSCA transmittal no:13-10
	2023	25	DSCA transmittal no:23-65
Australia	2014	58	-
United Arab Emirates	2020	20	DSCA transmittal no:21-01
Finland	2020	64	DSCA transmittal no:20-66
Czech Republic	2020	24	DSCA transmittal no:23-49
Romania	2024	32	DSCA transmittal no:24-94
Switzerland	2024	40	DSCA transmittal no:20-35

The DSCA alerted Congress to a possible military sale abroad with a $10 billion estimated cost to the Japanese government for the sale of four F-35s CTOL fighters, with the possibility of purchasing an additional 38s F-35 CTOL (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2012). The State Department decided to authorize a possible military sale of 105 F-35s and associated equipment to the Government of Japan, with a $23.11 billion estimated cost (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). The proposed transaction will improve security and support U.S. foreign policy and national security goal in the Asia-Pacific area (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020).

For an estimated $10.8 billion, the DSCA alerted Congress to a possible sale of 60 F-35s to the Korean government (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2013). The Republic of Korea significantly contributes to North East Asia's political stability, economic development, and peace (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2013). The State Department has authorized a potential sale of military equipment to the Republic of Korea of 25 F-35 CTOL aircraft, estimated to cost $5.06 billion (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2023). This sale will enhance the security of a significant ally in the Indo-Pacific region, thus promoting the American foreign policy and national security objectives (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2023). Although it was not explicitly mentioned in the 2013 sales statement, the Indo-Pacific region is stated in the 2023 sales statement. We consider it part of China’s strategy. Australia has committed to buying 58 F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighters (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2014).

The State Department has consented to approve a potential foreign military sale of 50 F-35s and associated equipment to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for an estimated $10.4 billion (Defense Security

Cooperation Agency, 2020). The U.S. has relied on the UAE for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East and continues to do so (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020).

At an estimated cost of $12.5 billion, the U.S. State Department has approved Finland to purchase 64 F-35s (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). The planned sale will improve European security, supporting the U.S. in national security and foreign policy (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). For an estimated $5.62 billion, the State Department has decided to authorize a possible military sale of 24 F-35s to the Czech Republic's government (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). By enhancing the security of NATO and Europe, the proposed transaction will advance American national security and foreign policy objectives (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). A possible foreign military sale expected to cost $7.2 billion for thirty-two F-35s to the Romanian government has been approved by the U.S. State Department. (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2024). By strengthening the security of a NATO ally in Europe, this sale will further American foreign policy and national security goals (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). For an estimated $6.58 billion, the State Department has authorized a possible sale of 40 F-35s to Switzerland (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2024). This purchase will benefit American national security and international policy by contributing to the security of a friendly European country. (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2024).

Three groups of F-35 sales can be examined: the Middle East, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. China is regarded as the greatest threat in the U.S. NSS documents, and sales to Japan, Korea, and Australia are thought to be made to contain China. The Abraham Accords' normalization with Israel in the Middle East facilitates F-35 sales to the UAE. To strengthen Europe's combined new-generation air power against Russia, the F-35s were sold to Finland, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Switzerland. Switzerland's purchase of F-35s despite its neutrality is an intriguing example.

DISCUSSION

The US military equipment sales to Türkiye illustrate the lack of confidence between the U.S., Türkiye, and Greece, despite being NATO allies. The withdrawal of Türkiye from the F-35 fighter jet program is believed to have significantly weakened Türkiye's position. The American refusal to give NATO member Türkiye F-35 aircraft and its protracted denial of Türkiye's request to upgrade its F-16 fleet raise serious questions about NATO's capacity to protect Türkiye. Specifically, the U.S. excluded Türkiye from the F-35 program, despite approving the sale of F-35 fighter jets to Sweden in 2020, a non-NATO member, and Switzerland, a neutral state. Regarding F-16 modernization, it is a very harsh indication that Türkiye has yet to approve the request, even though it has approved requests from non-NATO members, Bahrain

and Morocco. This warning is reinforced by the U.S. President's decision not to exercise the authority he would have had if Congress had not approved Türkiye.

The two factors in Walt's balance of threat theory function—perceived threats and geographic proximity—are effective in the F-35 fighter jets and the F-16 fleet upgrading that Türkiye requested from the U.S. In a roundabout way, Israel and Türkiye are now neighbors in Syria with the fall of the Assad administration. Even though they are NATO members, Greece and Türkiye differ on Cyprus, the Aegean Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece has exploited the CAATSA penalties as a result of Türkiye's purchase of Russian S-400 air defense missiles and Türkiye's tense relations with Israel. Despite the Trump administration's approval in principle, Greece and Israel's attempts to prevent the sale of the two weapons serve as more evidence that they perceive Türkiye as a threat.

Even though NATO Article 5 states that a war between Türkiye and Greece is impossible, Greece's cooperation with the US and Israel in modernizing and bolstering its air force, providing the US with new bases on its territory, and conducting joint exercises with Israel and the US is reminiscent of an opportunistic strategy described in the theory of jackal bandwagoning. An important conclusion regarding NATO's efficiency and the declining significance of Türkiye is that the US no longer considers the 7/10 ratio in favor of Greece, which it applied to Türkiye and Greece during the Cold War to maintain the regional balance of power. Greece has also damaged Türkiye's position in both Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean by including Cyprus in joint military exercises with the US and Israel, bypassing NATO, and organizing commercial deals in the region.

Even though Japan, Korea, and Australia are not NATO members, the US's sales of F-35s to them in the Asia-Pacific area are a consistent strategy to counter the Chinese threat and bolster their air forces for national security.

In the Middle East, Bahrain's permission to renew its F-16 fleet and the sale of F-35s to the UAE support the idea that these states met their demands with Israel's consent. In contrast, Israel's efforts to stop similar demands from coming from Türkiye are tangible proof of how effective Israel is in influencing US policies in the Middle East.

The results indicate that the U.S. reviews each arms sale individually and evaluates its political and military security before approving it. The US Department of Defense and the Department of State collaborate on foreign military sales. It outlines the favorable or unfavorable impacts of the individual state assessments on the U.S's national security and foreign policy. The threats explained in the national security

strategy documents are mainly consistent with the American claims about the modernization of the F-16 V and the sale of F-35 fighter jets. For instance, because China is viewed as a threat, it has been determined that F-35 sales in the Asia-Pacific Region fall under this category. This is because Europe considers Russia a threat, and the sales were authorized within the parameters of European security.

CONCLUSION

Here, it is essential to reiterate the objective of your research and to summarize the actions taken thus far to accomplish this aim. The conclusion reached was that the security of Thrace, the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus, and the Middle East all agree with the American foreign policy and arms sales. The US does not treat Greece and Türkiye similarly when it comes to modernizing F-35 and F-16 fighter jets, even though both countries are NATO members. It has been determined that the way states treat Israel has a significant impact on sales in the Greater Middle East. The Abraham Accords' normalization with Israel in the Middle East facilitates F-35 sales to the UAE and Bahrain. According to the U.S. DSCA's approval statement related to Bahrain's F-16 fleet modernization request, this sale does not affect the regional power shifts. Greece's request to modernize its F-16 and Türkiye's refusal to do the same will alter the balance of air power in the region. Furthermore, although the statement about Greece states that F-16 modernization will help it fight terrorism, Greece does not have a terrorism problem. NATO has recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization, and Türkiye has been fighting the PKK terrorist group. There is no logical reason to approach Türkiye negatively for its F-16 fleet modernization request. In conclusion, we claim that the American failure to provide Türkiye, a NATO member and combatant of the PKK terrorist group, with a favorable response to its request for F-16 modernization does not align with the principles of the NATO Alliance.

Türkiye's other options in the Middle East are to either normalize relations with Israel and buy weapons from the U.S., particularly on matters like modernizing the F-16 and F-35 fighters, or to remain in the same state of affairs, which has been prolonged with ambiguous rhetoric. We can also conclude that the U.S. will maintain its current position against Türkiye with the proxy PKK/PYD within the borders it has drawn in Syria, concentrating its center of gravity on the Asia-Pacific region against China in the near future.

Combining all of the empirical data with the presumptions of neorealism theory leads us to the conclusion that, although Greece does not face an existential threat that would require defensive realism, it is pursuing a strategy that is sometimes referred to as jackal bandwagoning—following the US in its own national interests and modernizing its air force to gain advantages in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The US undertakes arms sales based on its own national interests and strategic aims rather than liberal ideas like human rights and democracy, as evidenced by findings. Under the guise of advancing US interests,

F-35 fighter jets and F-16 upgrading opportunities—which are not offered to Türkiye despite its membership in NATO—are given to non-NATO nations. In a similar vein, it is alarming that the YPG, a non-state entity and an extension of a terrorist organization, is armed by the U.S.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

The author declares that all contributions to this manuscript were made solely by the author. The author also declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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