

## What's Behind the US-Turkey Rift?

Unrelated to Pastor Brunson Imprisoned in Turkey

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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*Imprisoned in Turkey since October 2016 on charges of involvement in the failed months earlier coup attempt against President Erdogan, the Trump regime's demand for Andrew Brunson's release conceals what's really behind the US/Turkey rift.*

It's all about what Michel Chossudovsky calls a ["Russia-Turkey-Iran 'triple entente,'" - growing Ankara ties with Washington's main adversaries.](#)

The US doesn't give a hoot about the safety and well-being of its ordinary citizens at home or when abroad - only its privileged ones, no others.

Turkey is a key NATO member, its military second largest in the alliance to Washington's.

The Trump regime wants Erdogan allied with its anti-Russia, anti-Iran agenda. He rejects US sanctions on both countries, intends maintaining normal political and economic relations.

Days earlier, Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu said his government

"never supported any sanctions against Russia. We have already said that we are not going to support sanctions against Iran either."

He called on the Trump regime to rescind sanctions on Turkey, adding

"(t)hey must drop their threats, otherwise there can be no progress in (bilateral) relations."

His relationship with Washington deteriorated in the wake of the aborted 2016 coup attempt.

He blamed it on ex-pat cleric Fethullah Gulen, living in Pennsylvania. Washington refuses to extradite him. No evidence indicates his involvement in what happened. He denies accusations against him.

While his relations with America soured, they've grown stronger with Russia since a Turkish F-16 downed a Russian Su-24 warplane in Syrian airspace in November 2015.

His political and economic ties to Moscow and Tehran are growing. Washington treats

Turkey as both ally (in NATO) and Eurasian adversary.

Erdogan is playing the Russia/Iran, and US cards simultaneously, increasingly shifting his allegiance East, away from the West – another body blow to Washington’s imperial agenda.

On August 17, Trump disgracefully tweeted:

“Turkey has taken advantage of the United States for many years. They are now holding our wonderful Christian Pastor, who I must now ask to represent our Country as a great patriot hostage. We will pay nothing for the release of an innocent man, but we are cutting back on Turkey!”

On Thursday, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin threatened more US sanctions on Turkey on top of others imposed “if they don’t release (Brunson) quickly.”

Erdogan’s foreign minister Cavusoglu responded, saying

“(t)he US does not know, it cannot see who its true friend is. We can easily solve problems with the US but not with its current mindset.”

Both countries sharply increased tariffs on each other’s products – on Turkish steel and aluminum, on US alcohol, tobacco and vehicles.

Ankara began selling off US sovereign debt, reduced from \$32.6 – \$28.8 billion in June, according to a US Treasury report. In November 2017, Turkey held \$61.2 billion worth of US treasuries, less than half that amount now.

In 2018, Russia dumped over 80% of its US sovereign debt holdings, holding less than \$15 billion now.

The Trump regime slammed Ankara’s agreement with Russia to buy its S-400 missile defense systems. It threatened non-delivery of contracted for US F-35s to its military.

Erdogan expressed ire over US support for Kurdish YPG fighters in northern Syria he wants removed or eliminated near Turkey’s border.

Washington wants all nations bending to its will. Erdogan’s support for what the Trump regime opposes lies at the root of the deep rift between both countries.

It’s got nothing to do with pastor Brunson the Trump regime didn’t give a hoot about until recent weeks.

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*His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”*

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