

## TURKEY AND THE BOMB

*Executive Summary*

### The Paper in a Nutshell

Not even the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran is likely to push Turkey to develop its own nuclear weapons. Turkey already benefits from the NATO nuclear deterrent, has a stellar nonproliferation record, and is actively pursuing a range of conventional forces to protect it from modern threats. At the same time, Ankara is intent on developing nuclear technology to feed its rapidly growing energy needs and is a strong supporter of states' rights to peaceful nuclear energy.

### Vital Statistics

- A member of NATO, Turkey has hosted American nuclear weapons for nearly six decades and currently hosts an estimated 90 B61 gravity bombs at Incirlik Air Force Base.
- In addition to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Turkey has signed on to every relevant International Atomic Energy Agency instrument governing the spread of nuclear technology.
- Turkey's surging economy and growing population is straining the country's current electrical infrastructure. Electricity demand has grown by more than 8 percent per year in the last decade and is expected to grow at a similar pace through 2030.
- The Turkish government is planning for nuclear energy to account for 5 percent of Turkish electricity production by 2023.
- While Turkey has invested in a number of technologies needed to form the basis of a civilian nuclear energy program, the country does not yet have a nuclear reactor.

### Recommendations for U.S. Policymakers

**Reaffirm the American nuclear deterrent:** Turkey considers its alliance with the United States the cornerstone of its security. Washington should take concrete steps—including the continued forward deployment of tactical nuclear weapons—to reassure Ankara of its commitment to the relationship.

**Expand Turkey's conventional military capabilities:** The United States should help Turkey develop conventional military capabilities sufficiently robust to deter any nuclear-armed neighbors. Such efforts should focus where possible on intelligence, surveillance, and information management assets interoperable with NATO forces.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*A full-length version of this study is available on the web at: [CarnegieEndowment.org/ulgen](https://CarnegieEndowment.org/ulgen). For more information or to speak with one of our scholars, please do not hesitate to contact our government affairs manager, Scott Toussaint, at (202) 939-2307 or [stoussaint@ceip.org](mailto:stoussaint@ceip.org).*

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