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Submission from the Campaign Against Arms Trade to the inquiry by the Foreign Affairs Committee into the UK's relations with Turkey

1. The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) in the UK is working to end the international arms trade and promote progressive demilitarisation in arms-producing countries. The arms business has a devastating impact on human rights and security, holds back economic development, and reinforces a militaristic approach to solving international problems.
2. Turkey, a member of NATO, is situated in a region of great turmoil sharing borders with Iraq and Syria. There have long been tensions with separatist Kurds; these have reignited in the last year. Under Justice and Development Party (AKP) President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has a government which has cracked down brutally on its opponents. The repression has increased since the July 2016 attempted military coup. Over 100,000 government workers, including teachers, police and judges, have been detained or suspended. Opposition media has been closed.
3. Your Committee will undoubtedly receive submissions concerning the attempted coup, as well as the situation regarding the Kurds, from those far more qualified than CAAT to make them. This brief submission just aims to highlight a few points with regards to the provision of military and security equipment to Turkey and joint projects with the indigenous Turkish arms industry.

UK arms sales

4. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2016 Yearbook, table 15.4), the major suppliers of conventional weapons to Turkey between 2011 and 2015 were the USA, accounting for 63% of the total, South Korea, Spain and Italy. European Union countries issued licences for the export of military equipment (using a broader definition of this) valued at [nearly Euro2,500million](#) between 2012 and 2014, the latest years for which figures are available.
5. The value of known UK export licences for military equipment to Turkey over the last three years for which data is available, July 2013 to June 2016, was [£466million](#). Many of the licences were for components, including those for surface-to-air missiles and helicopters.
6. T129 attack helicopters made by Tusas Turkish Aerospace Industries under licence from AgustaWestland were deployed in 2015 in support of operations against Kurdish separatists. ([DefenseNews, 15.5.16](#)) It is unknown, but very possible, that at least some of the [helicopter components](#) licensed are for the T129.
7. From information supplied as a result of [Freedom of Information requests](#), it is known that from 2010 to 2015 inclusive applications for export licences to Turkey were made to the Export Control Organisation by at least [113 companies](#). The category of equipment (the rating) applied for is available, but no details of the actual equipment.
8. The UK government would like to see more arms sales to Turkey. It is a "priority market" (Parliamentary Written Answer [42006](#), 12.7.16) of the UK government's arms sales agency, the Defence and Security Organisation (DSO), now within the Department for International Trade. Turkey is welcome at UK arms exhibitions. In 2015, as in previous years, the UK government [officially invited](#) Turkey to send a delegation to the biggest, the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI), while in July 2016 the Turkish delegation attended the Farnborough International Airshow as [guests of the DSO](#).

9. Turkey's official invitation to arms fairs and its inclusion in the "priority market" list, sends the message to President Erdoğan that the UK government is unconcerned about his record on human rights and democracy when there is a potential for military sales.

Building a Turkish arms industry

10. The establishment of new arms industries increases global arms proliferation. Even if the equipment produced is never used, it squanders resources, both financial and the skills of the employees. Unfortunately, Turkey began to establish a huge military-industrial complex in the mid-1980's. It wanted to modernise and re-equip the country's armed forces and to lessen its dependence on military imports.
11. In building its indigenous military industry the Turkish government seeks to emulate other countries, including the UK, where military prowess and being able to produce major weapons systems is unfortunately equated with a superior place in the world.
12. During the 2015 Turkish election campaign, the AKP boasted that Turkey will make all of its own military equipment, with massive posters on the streets proclaiming, 'We're making our own warplanes' and 'We're making our own tanks'. President Erdoğan stated: "Our goal is to completely rid our defence industry of foreign dependency by 2023." ([Reuters, 27.5.15](#)) Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said: "Now we have a Turkey that won't bow to others with its own national defence industry. This is the new Turkey." ([Turkey Pulse, 27.1.15](#))
13. Turkey is, however, not yet rid of "foreign dependency" in its military industry. It has many overseas partners. For example, in December 2015 BAE Systems was chosen to assist with the design of Turkey's new fighter aircraft, the TFX which it hopes will be in service in 2023. It will build on one of several "concepts" designed by Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) in conjunction with Gripen manufacturer Saab. ([Flight Global, 3.12.15](#)) Rolls Royce is hoping to supply the engine. ([DefenseNews, 5.12.15](#)) While the TFX project has been delayed by the events of July 2016, agreement with TAI is still expected by the end of 2016. ([Bloomberg, 16.8.16](#))
14. Turkey also wants to build its reputation as an arms seller. At DSEI 2015, for example, the Turkish Defence and Aerospace Industry Exporters' Association was the sole "International Partner". Turkey's arms exports are growing fast. In 2011 they were worth US\$817million, but this rose to US\$1.66billion in 2015. (*Jane's Defence Weekly, 10.4.16*) The biggest purchaser countries are the United States and others where it is engaged with companies in collaborative projects. However, the second largest group of customers are countries such as Azerbaijan, Pakistan and the Central Asian republics which prefer the much cheaper Turkish products to their Western-made equivalents. ([AI Monitor, 4.5.16](#))
15. The Erdoğan government's reaction after the July 2016 attempted coup has led even a supplier government to question the sharing of some technologies in joint production initiatives. An anonymous "Western military source" was quoted as saying: "We have been sharing sensitive technology with Turkey on the arms that we have been producing jointly ... Our governments have begun to question whether to release sensitive technology." (*Jane's Defence Weekly, 27.7.16*)
16. It is good that questions are beginning to be asked, if only in this limited way. The UK government needs to think again about all military links with Turkey.

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