

On the Road to Gog and Magog? Increasing Turkish Military Presence in Syria Concerns Israel

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan invited Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham leader and Syrian interim president Ahmad al-Sharaa to Ankara for discussions regarding the establishment of Turkish bases in Syria, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Several sources familiar with the discussions told Reuters that Erdoğan and al-Sharaa discussed the possibility of establishing two Turkish bases in Syria's central desert region, including a former Russian airbase (T4) east of the city of Homs.

The agreement could also include the use of Syrian airspace for military purposes and Turkish participation in the training of the forces of the new Syrian army.

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The report also said that the agreement could include Turkish protection of Syrian airspace to prevent future attacks, such as the Israeli strikes aimed at destroying military supplies left by the former government of Bashar al-Assad.

According to a report in "Middle East Eye", Turkey has already begun formulating construction plans for the base, which is located near the city of Palmyra in central Syria. That report claims that Turkey would initially establish air defense systems on the base, before stationing long-range UAVs, such as the Turkish Bayraktar TB2, which has seen extensive use by Turkish forces and Turkish militias against Kurdish fighters

in Syria, Iraq, and eastern Turkey, as well as in Libya.

An Israeli security source said that any Turkish air base in Syria would harm Israel's freedom of action. "This is a potential threat that we oppose," the source said.

While the Turkish air force is not as advanced as the Israeli Air Force, which boasts newer versions of the F-16 and F-15 fighter planes also used by Turkey, as well as the F-35 stealth fighter, the Muslim country is working to develop its own fifth-generation stealth fighter jet, the "TF Kaan."