

Trump Regime Pressuring Turkey to Keep Its S-400s Nonoperational

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Pompeo reportedly warned Turkey that it faces “more (US) sanctions” if its Russian S-400 air defense missiles become operational.

What’s the point of them if not able to protect against potential aerial threats. In 2018, US and Ankara officials discussed this issue.

The Trump regime demanded that Turkey buy US Patriot air defense missiles, not Russian S-400s, its officials rejecting the call.

A statement at the time said S-400s will be bought and deployed because Turkey needs them against potential threats, adding:

“All countries surrounding us have missile systems. Imagine if, for example, relations with Iran deteriorate over Syria and they launch missiles on us. How Turkey will be able to protect itself?”

Separately last year, a Trump regime statement said

“Turkey should not use the S-400s even if it does buy them from Russia.”

Ankara dismissed the idea, calling it unrealistic, adding it chose a “19-month delivery option so that we could prepare our technical works and use them under fully Turkish control. We are very sensitive on this.”

Ankara chose Russian S-400s because of their lower cost, state-of-the-art capabilities exceeding the best in the West, and its right to maintain full control when operational.

US air defense systems are controlled by rotating Pentagon chosen NATO crews, not nations buying these missiles.

With Pentagon commanders in control, US air defense missiles can only be used by nations buying them with their permission, subject to their will, an unacceptable arrangement Ankara rejected.

In response to Turkey’s S-400s purchase, the Trump regime removed the country from the F-35 program, a White House statement saying:

“Turkey’s decision to purchase Russian S-400 air defense systems renders its continued involvement with the F-35 impossible (sic).”

“The F-35 cannot coexist with a Russian intelligence collection platform that will be used to learn about its advanced capabilities (sic).”

“Turkey has been a longstanding and trusted partner and NATO ally for over 65 years, but accepting the S-400 undermines the commitments all NATO allies made to each other to move away from Russian systems” — despite no Kremlin threat to alliance or other countries.

Pentagon officials said the door isn’t closed for Turkey to rejoin the F-35 program if it reverses its S-400 purchase decision, what clearly hasn’t happened.

Turkish F-35 personnel were ordered to leave the US by July 31 — where they’ve been undergoing training.

Ankara is an F-35 program partner, producing around 900 parts for the warplanes, its involvement reportedly to be wound down and ended by March 2020, according to US undersecretary of war for acquisition Ellen Lord and deputy war undersecretary for policy David Trachtenberg.

On Thursday, Russian arms exporter Rosoboronexport head **Alexander Mikheev** said Moscow and Ankara are discussing production of S-400 component parts in Turkey.

“Now we are negotiating to continue our cooperation on this issue, including the organization of license production of certain component parts of the system in Turkey,” he said, adding:

Delivering S-400s to Turkey “strengthened the strategic partnership” between both countries.

“Rosoboronexport plans to expand its contacts with the Turkish side as much as possible to implement mutually beneficial projects in the fields of helicopter construction, combat aviation, and air defense.”

Delivery of S-400 equipment began on July 12 — continuing through April 2020 to complete what Turkey ordered, including installation, and making the air defense operational.

Ankara denies that S-400s are incompatible with NATO systems. It warned it’ll retaliate if the Trump regime imposes sanctions for its purchase, Turkish **Foreign Minister Melvet Cavusoglu** saying:

“If America has very negative steps toward us, if there are sanctions or further steps, we will have answers to America.”

Congressional leaders demanded imposition of sanctions, Trump holding off so far.

As of now, Turkish companies involved in the F-35 program haven’t officially been ordered to cease producing parts. They continue processing orders received, how much longer uncertain.

According to Turkish defense industry analyst Levent Ozgul, US signals are unfriendly.

Pulling Turkey from the F-35 program “exposed Trump’s weakness. The big wheel in Washington is spinning to Turkey’s detriment, despite Trump.”

“He will probably acquiesce to that wheel again and impose” sanctions on Turkey for buying Russian S-400s.

Ozgul believes suspending Turkey from the F-35 program is prelude to removing it permanently.

Last week, Russian Su-35 producer Rostec CEO **Sergey Chemezov** said

“(i)f our Turkish colleagues express a desire, we are ready to work out deliveries of (these) fighter jets.”

A Turkish military source said President Erdogan would study the offer.

Sputnik News called the aircraft “a single-seat, twin-engine, supermaneuverable warplane designed by the Sukhoi Design Bureau. It is widely used by the Russian Airforce, while China and Indonesia have also ordered the aircraft.”

Perhaps Turkey will be the next foreign buyer. China reportedly is very pleased with the Su-35’s performance and may buy more of these fighter jets.

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