

Turkey Rejects US Demand to Return Russian S-400s

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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The capabilities of Russia's S-400 air defense system is unmatched by anything in the West.

China was Russia's first foreign buyer, its military saying it "saw that the S-400 system by its capabilities today is unparalleled in the world in its armament class" — including its ability to overcome heavy enemy fire and electronic countermeasures at altitudes up to 23 miles, its range up to 250 miles.

A dozen or more other countries expressed interest in or already contracted to buy S-400s — notably India, the Saudis, Iraq, Qatar, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, and Vietnam.

India paid Russia \$5.2 billion for five S-400 systems to be delivered early next year.

Following Turkish President Erdogan's mid-November White House meeting with Trump, he said the following:

"We agreed to seek solutions to the S-400 issue. I explained to Trump once again how we came to the point of buying S-400s."

"I told him that we could not give up on the S-400s and that Turkey will not turn back."

"We regard the proposal to completely remove the S-400s as meddling in our sovereign rights."

"There can be no question of us leaving the S-400s and turning toward the Patriots."

"If the current uncompromising stance on the F-35s persists, we told him (Trump) that Turkey would seek alternatives to meet its medium-term needs" — notably by buying Russian state-of-the-art Su-57 stealth warplanes, he may buy anyway.

According to Russian arms exporter Rosoboronexport head **Alexander Mikheev**, a deal with Turkey for more S-400s may be agreed on next year, saying:

"We hope that in the first half of 2020 we will sign the contract documents. But I want to stress that military technical cooperation with Turkey is not limited to the supply of the S-400s. We have big plans ahead," adding:

“You can see how confident India, China, Turkey and other countries are on the international stage.”

“Many are openly outraged by US sanctions policy, which is trying to prevent them from developing their own armed forces and technical military cooperation with Russia.”

Following delivery of S-400s to Turkey last summer, the Trump regime threatened sanctions on the country — so far not imposed.

Last week, a senior State Department official unacceptably demanded that Ankara return purchased S-400s to Russia.

Hardline **Senator Chris Van Hollen** urged Trump to impose sanctions on Turkey. He accused Erdogan of “thumbing his nose at Trump, the US and NATO.”

Days earlier, the Turkish Defense Industry Directorate said the systems were bought to be used, not put aside.

Turkey’s **Foreign Minister Melvet Cavusoglu** said

“(w)e told (the Americans) that we didn’t buy these systems as a prop.”

Turkey’s **Defense Minister Hulusi Akar** said the S-400s “will be in ‘stand alone’ mode. They will operate independently” of NATO systems.

Turkey’s military began testing its S-400s by flying warplanes over Ankara on Monday. Further tests will be conducted at high and low altitudes.

Head of Russia’s Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSVTS) **Dmitry Shugayev** said:

“We will finish training the Turkish personnel by the end of this year. The system will be placed on combat duty by spring.”

It won’t be stored, kept inoperative, or returned to Russia. S-400s were bought to be installed and used if necessary. There’s no turning back.

A Final Comment

Bloomberg News reported that Senate members vowed to sanction Turkey for its S-400 purchase.

Pompeo earlier warned of Trump regime sanctions if Ankara makes them operational.

On Tuesday, he equivocated, saying

“(w)e’re still talking to the Turks. We are still trying to figure out our way through this thing,” adding:

“I don’t want to get ahead of what the president may or may not do, but we

have made clear to the Turkish government our desire to see them move away from putting into full operationalization the S-400 weapon system.”

Congressional and/or White House sanctions on Turkey for its legitimate purchase, with more S-400s likely to be bought in the new year, perhaps Russian Su-35 and Su-57 warplanes as well, will further strain already greatly strained relations.

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