

# Turkey's Purchase of Russian S-400 Air Defense System: A Blow to the US War Machine

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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*Turkey's purchase of state-of-the-art Russian S-400 air defense equipment at the expense of less capable US Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) missiles is of much greater significance than has been reported. More on this below.*

The White House, State Department, and Pentagon were uncharacteristically quiet after the first delivery of S-400 equipment arrived in Turkey on Friday.

A planned Pentagon briefing on the delivery was delayed without explanation. On July 9, the State Department said little more than acknowledge that "taking control of the S-400 (system is) not very new," adding:

The Trump regime's "position...as it relates to Turkey and the S-400 has not changed. We - again, everybody knows - the Turkish authorities know - the legislation that has been passed in Congress (on imposing sanctions), and all of that remains the same."

"We have said that Turkey...will face real and negative consequences if they accept the S-400."

All of the above and much more was stated by Trump regime officials numerous times before, a failed effort to dissuade Turkey from going its own way in purchasing military-related equipment, especially from Russia, its sovereign right.

Former Aerospace Industries Association vice president, longtime Washington insider, acting Trump regime war secretary **Mark Esper** only said he's "aware of Turkey taking delivery of the S-400," adding: "Our position" on the purchase has not changed.

Last week, Esper spoke to his Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar, reportedly cut short after 30 minutes. A customary readout didn't follow, showing both countries are worlds apart on this issue.

Following the June 28 - 29 Osaka, Japan G20 summit, Turkish President Erdogan said Trump assured him of no sanctions for buying Russian S-400s.

"We have heard from him personally that this would not happen," said Erdogan adding: "We are strategic partners with the United States. As strategic partners, nobody has the right to meddle in Turkey's sovereign rights. Everyone should know this."

Around the same time, after Esper met with his NATO counterparts in Brussels, he said Turkey would be removed from the F-35 program and face sanctions for buying Russian S-400s.

An unnamed NATO official said “we are concerned about the potential consequences of Turkey’s decision to acquire the S-400 system” when combined with alliance air operations in and around Turkey.

On Friday, a joint leadership statement by GOP and Dem Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees said the following in response to delivery of S-400 equipment to Turkey:

“On a strong bipartisan basis, Congress has made it clear that there must be consequences for President Erdogan’s misguided S-400 acquisition (sic), a troubling signal of strategic alignment with Putin’s Russia and a threat to the F-35 program (sic),” adding:

“As a result, we urge President Trump to fully implement sanctions as required by” the US Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).”

The legislation violates international and constitutional law under its Supremacy Clause (Article VI, Clause 2), stating all International laws, treaties, conventions, and agreements are automatically US law.

Congressional measures countering the above have no legal standing. Security Council members have exclusive authority to impose sanctions, not individual nations against others.

No matter, US Senators Inhofe, Reed, Risch and Menendez urged Trump to impose sanctions on Turkey, adding:

“(C)oooperation (with Turkey) will not be possible as long as President Erdogan remains fixated on deepening ties with Vladimir Putin at the expense of...security of the NATO alliance (sic).”

Separately, Senators Lankford, Shaheen, Tillis, and Van Hollen said

“Turkey cannot have both Russian and American defense equipment sitting side by side,” adding:

“As long as President Erdogan insists on putting US and NATO assets at risk by acquiring Russian defense technology, the US will withhold our fifth-generation fighter jets and apply our normal restrictions on any government that purchases Russian military equipment” — meaning sanctions and possible other hostile actions.

Geopolitical analyst [Jean Perier](#) explained what’s really behind US angst over Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400s.

On the one hand, it’s about US military contractors losing out to foreign competitors in the

sale of weapons, munitions, and related equipment.

Once bought, nations become captive to the White House, congressional, media supported US military, industrial, security complex.

An unnamed European source said the US “seek(s) to establish a distribution network that puts their customers in a position when they have no choice other than purchasing the constant ‘upgrades,’ ” adding:

“All this resembles the deadly grip of an octopus or a swamp, that you just cannot outrun no matter how fast you go.”

Perier explained what most observers following this issue may not understand, saying:

“Even if Ankara chose to purchase Patriot missiles via NATO, upon delivery its armed forces wouldn’t have come into direct control of those systems, as those could only be manned by NATO crews operating on a rotational basis left up to the Pentagon,” adding:

“Turkey has already had this sort of experience with its previous purchases from Washington, and at some point its leadership realized that this layout wasn’t ensuring its national security, as it wasn’t designed for this purpose.”

“Ankara couldn’t use any of the weapons that it paid for as they could only be used when the Pentagon said so” — making Turkey a US vassal state.

No longer willing to put up with this affront was key to Erdogan’s S-400 purchase, perhaps shifting more to Russian weapons over US ones when their superiority is clear — though Ankara still wants US F-35s it partly paid for, some of its pilots undergoing training to fly them.

Turkey’s S-400 purchase, followed by India already having paid Russia \$5.2 billion for five S-400 systems to be delivered early next year, will likely also be followed by other nations going the same way.

A dozen or more other countries expressed interest in buying S-400s, including the Saudis, Iraq, Qatar, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, and Vietnam.

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.

Purchase of the system by enough countries that appears forthcoming will be a major blow to US military contractors, fearing increasing loss of their international dominance to Russia.

Perier called S-400s sales to foreign buyers “a symbol of...resistance (to) vassal submission to Washington.”

It’s why bipartisan US policymakers are frantic to try countering what they’re losing control over.

Russia's gain over the US is a blow to its war machine.

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