

What “Moral Obligation” Did Russia Have to Not Sell S-300s to Syria? Moscow-Tel Aviv’s Unspoken Relationship

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Lavrov’s remark about how Russia no longer has a “moral obligation” to refrain from selling its S-300 anti-air defense systems to Syria has caused serious confusion among the ranks of the Alt-Media Community who don’t quite understand what he meant.

The “Moral Obligation”

The Alt-Media Community celebrated Russia’s [announcement](#) that it was considering selling the S-300 anti-air defense system to Syria following the [US-led strikes](#) earlier this month, but then some confusion kicked in after Foreign Minister Lavrov later [revealed](#) that no decision had yet been made in this respect. It can’t be known for sure, but the threats made by Russia’s “[Israeli](#)” ally to “[retaliate](#)” against Syria if Damascus uses these armaments to protect its skies could have been a factor behind why Moscow might be reconsidering this [no-cost](#) deal. Another source of confusion is over Russia’s intentions in countenancing this move in the first place, since many people don’t understand what Lavrov had in mind when he spoke about how his country [no longer has a “moral obligation”](#) to refrain from selling these wares to Syria.

Russia’s top diplomat [preceded](#) his curious remark by stating that

“We took into consideration their argument that this would destabilize the situation, despite the missile systems being a purely defensive system”,

after which he mentioned that the latest developments changed the situation and removed Moscow’s prior reluctance. Still, many in the Alt-Media Community took issue with his choice of words because of the literally moralizing tone attached to them which seemed to suggest that selling S-300 defensive missile systems to Syria was previously “immoral” until “two wrongs made a right” following the latest US-led bombing. It’s inconceivable for many who are indoctrinated with [Alt-Media dogma](#) to countenance, but Russia used to be very “Western-friendly” and it was in this international context that Moscow made its decision to withhold sales of the S-300s to Syria.

Rethinking Russia: A Former Western Friend, Not An Eternal Foe

Contrary to the myths that began to form after “EuroMaidan” more or less “formalized” the

already existing [New Cold War](#), Russia only endeavored to carve out a respectable place in the American-led world order while simultaneously undertaking incremental steps to reform it towards a more equitable multipolar one in the future. That began to change following the synchronized Eurasian-wide asymmetrical [Hybrid War](#) aggression that the US started to carry out against Russia in the half decade afterwards which made it undeniable that Washington would never acknowledge the sovereign boundaries that Moscow demanded for itself. It took a while for most of the country's permanent military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracies ("deep state") to recognize this inconvenient geopolitical fact, but the Rubicon was crossed after Kremlin "ideologist" Vladislav Surkov penned his [now-famous article](#) a few weeks ago about how Russia is a "half-breed".

In it, the man who is regarded as [one of the most influential](#) in modern Russia today and a key advisor of President Putin wrote how preparations must be made for a prolonged struggle against the US and its allies, and that this might regrettably result in a degree of "solitude" that the country can't ignore. Accordingly, it also means that the centuries-long dream of some circles of the Russian elite to be "accepted" by their Western counterparts per what has been claimed by others is a massive "inferiority complex" has abruptly ground to a halt and been exposed as nothing more than a manipulative fantasy for controlling the country's "movers and shakers". In light of this long-belated revelation, Russia no longer harbored any illusions about the perceived benefits that it hoped to achieve by paying lip service to the West and complying with its dictates such as the one ordering it to not sell S-300s to Syria.

"Israeli" Interests

Truthfully, there was never anything "moral" about this decision in the first place, nor was Russia ever "obliged" to do what it was told, but this evaluation isn't due to the author's subjective take on the situation but rather his objective assessment of the Neo-Realist "19th-Century Great Power Chessboard" paradigm that he believes is playing the most prominent role in guiding decision makers. Whether rightly or wrongly, Russia believed that its interests at the time would best be served by obeying the West and not opposing it, but it can only be speculated why it came to this conclusion. Nevertheless, the policy was implemented and remained in force for several years even though it was obvious that the Syrians needed the S-300s to protect themselves from the [over 100 "Israeli" airstrikes](#) that have thus far taken place, but cynically, this may have actually been the Neo-Realist (i.e. interests-driven) motivation for delaying the shipment the entire time.

For amoral reasons that have nothing to do with "obligations" but everything to do with "[balancing](#)", Russia might have refused to sell the S-300s to Syria in order to [satisfy the strategic interests](#) of "Israel", which wants to retain full control of its neighbor's airspace in order to bomb it at will on the pretext that it's targeting the IRGC or Hezbollah. It's for precisely this reason why Tel Aviv is so vehemently against Moscow's rekindled interest in giving the S-300s to Damascus, but just like in the past, this system might never make it to the Arab Republic and there's a chance that Russia's statements on the matter are once again all about taking what it believes to be the "moral" position at the time and nothing more. Words without actions might come off as "insincere", especially to Syria, but to the Great Powers that Russia's courting, they'd only be seen as standard "diplomacy".

Some of the masses might reflexively respond that this is in and of itself "immoral", but the fact is that "morals", "ethics", and "principles" don't guide International Relations -

interests do – though they’re often relied upon to craft publicly presentable explanations for predetermined policy decisions. Another point to reflect on is that Russia might very well go forward with this weapons transfer anyhow, but that it’s unlikely to make much of a difference in the grand scheme of things because “Israel” will probably follow through on its threats to strike these systems if they interfere with its bombing missions. The S-300s might be able to take down a few warplanes, but each battery would be utterly demolished by the massive retaliatory strike that could be expected and which would overwhelm the target unless Russia rose to its defense, which it won’t ever do because Moscow isn’t going to go beyond its anti-terrorist military mandate.

Concluding Thoughts

Therefore, all the talk about the S-300s will mostly just remain that – talk—because they’re unlikely to affect any of the prevailing battlespace dynamics in the uncertain event that they’re even dispatched to Syria in the first place. Russia’s remarks about this system were mostly for soft power purposes in allaying the understandably distraught Syrian population, much like Lavrov’s [earlier statement about Afrin](#) was designed to have the same effect. A clear pattern is thus emerging, and it’s that Russia responds to military aggression against Syria through promising statements that raise its countrymen’s hopes and deflect their attention from focusing on the unpopular fact that Moscow will never overstep its mandate in [threatening “World War III”](#) in their defense. Whether one thinks that this approach is “right”, “wrong”, or simply feels indifferent to it, this is the reality of the situation as it presently exists, and Russia doesn’t have any “moral obligation” whatsoever when it comes to Syria, for better or for worse.

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