
US promises Turkey 'constraints' in relations as it kicks it out of F-35 program over S-400

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Washington is cutting Ankara out of the F-35 program, because the stealth fighter “cannot coexist” alongside the Russian air defense systems currently being delivered to Turkey, the White House announced.

“The F-35 cannot coexist with a Russian intelligence collection platform that will be used to learn about its advanced capabilities,” White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham [announced](#) on Wednesday.

The US has repeatedly threatened to remove Turkey from the international consortium building the F-35 and block deliveries of the jets Ankara has bought and paid for, if the planned purchase of the Russian missiles went ahead. The government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has maintained this would be against the rules and said it would buy whatever weapons it wants.

The White House sought to strike a conciliatory tone, however, calling Ankara a *“longstanding and trusted partner and NATO Ally for over 65 years,”* even if the S-400 purchase *“undermines the commitments”* of NATO to not buy Russian weapons.

“The United States still greatly values our strategic relationship with Turkey,” Grisham said in a statement. *“Our military-to-military relationship is strong, and we will continue to cooperate with Turkey extensively”* though mindful of the *“constraints”* posed by the S-400, she added.

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No mention was made of Erdogan's statement on Monday that Ankara would like to go "*much further*" and set up "*joint production*" of weapons with Russia going forward. The remarks came on the anniversary of a 2016 coup attempt that the Turkish government has blamed on an exiled cleric currently living in the US.
