

Answer To Question

Turkey's Agreement with Russia on the S-400 Deal and its Implications

(Translated)

[(Washington: The United States is freezing granting Turkey the F-35 stealth fighter ... A Pentagon spokesman said, "Pending an unequivocal Turkish decision to forgo delivery of the S-400, deliveries and activities associated with the stand-up of Turkey's F-35 operational capability have been suspended," Adding that "the dialogue is ongoing with Turkey on this important issue" ...)] i24news.tv 1/4/2019]

Question:

Turkey's agreement with Russia on the S-400 deal has started since September 2017. At that point, America did not object strongly to that agreement, but its position was more like a reservation. What made it hard-lined today after about a year and a half, and almost threatening Turkey if it receives this deal from Russia? May Allah reward you with the Good.

Answer:

In order to clarify the answer to the question, we review the following points:

1- The aggression of Russia began on 30/9/2015 on Syria after the agreement with America [the bombing immediately preceded the meeting between Obama and Putin on 29/9/2015 which lasted 90 minutes ... The Ukrainian crisis occupied the first part while the two presidents focused on the situation in Syria in the remaining part. The results of this meeting immediately showed, and on 30/9/2015 the Council of the Russian Federation unanimously approved Putin's request to use the Russian air force in Syria..." (Russia Today, 30/9/2015)]. America was aware that Russia may, if the war prolongs and the "quagmire" frustrates it, rush into uncalculated actions by America. So it wanted to make Turkey's Erdogan as its eyes to adjust the Russian rhythm according to the limits of the United States. So it instructed Turkey to engage with Russia in a similar alliance until Turkey controls the rhythm of Russian attacks so as not to exceed the limits required, which is not to eliminate the opposition gathered in Idlib before the end of the US project of the final solution to the Syrian crisis because America wants to keep the opposition to negotiate with the regime in the final solution.

2- But the problem was that Turkey appeared to be visibly opposed with Russia and the regime, that is, they are enemies. Then the issue worsened when the Russian plane was shot down by Turkish pilots on 24/11/2015 and Erdogan rode the wave! And refused to apologize. Because America was interested in Turkey's rapprochement with Russia, its opinion was that Turkey apologize and converge with Russia, and so this happened. After Turkey said that the Russian plane violated the airspace and does not deserve an apology, yet it apologized on 27/6/2016: [Dmitry Peskov, Press Secretary of the Kremlin said: "The Turkish president expressed his warm sympathy and condolences to the family of the Russian pilot who was killed and apologized," adding: "Erdogan will do all he can to reform the traditionally friendly relations between Turkey and Russia," (Al-Arabiya, 27/06/2016)]. It was also like a compensation [the mayor of the Turkish Kemer resort has proposed to grant a house to a the killed pilot's family during a meeting with Russian Consul in the city of Antalya, held earlier on Friday ... (Russia Today 07/01/2016)]. After Putin was the enemy that bombed the people, especially Mount Turkoman, talk with him became in a friendly atmosphere. Erdogan contacted Putin by phone on 29/6/2016 (According to sources in the Turkish presidency, the call was made in a very friendly atmosphere ... (Al-Arabi Al Jadeed, 29/6/2016)). And Turkey and Russia became like friends, and Erdogan calls Putin his friend although Russia continues to bomb the Muslims in Syria!

3- Thus, the friendship became intimate and Erdogan entered with Putin in agreements and meetings. We said in answer to a previous question on 5/2/2017: (Turkey kept playing this role in

service of America as a loyal subordinate even after the announcement of President-elect Trump's win on 9/11/2016, and it did not even think about any possible changes after resuming office on 20/1/2017.

Because Trump has shown flexibility towards Russia in his electoral campaign, Russia thought that by holding the Astana conference after Trump's inauguration will make America highly estimate the conference and attend it in high-level delegation. Russia had been eagerly waiting for president Trump to take office in hope that Trump's Secretary of State will attend. This is why Russia was looking forward for the Astana conference to be a start of negotiations for comprehensive peace between the Syrian opposition and the government of Bashar with support from Trump, as a result of its political stupidity thinking that Trump supports Russia! Thus, it invited Washington to attend the conference, expecting that it will be attended by a high-level delegation. It was a slap on the face for Russia when Washington sent the US ambassador in Astana instead as an observer! Thus, the Astana negotiations were held on 23/1/2017 and ended on 24/01/2017 without any significant result for a cease-fire; instead, the bombing intensified at Wadi Barada! Of course, without any political solution. So, the Astana talks were at a lower level than what Russia wanted, and they ended stalling on the ceasefire square.) **End of quote**

4- This situation continued until the end of 2017. The Russian situation worsened and Russia started to threaten to eliminate the opposition in Idlib. This was with great interest that America feared that Russia become stubborn and get out of America's control, and prepare for the final attack on Idlib before the final American solution to the Syrian crisis. At this point, it was necessary to converge Turkey with Russia strongly in a kind of an alliance to stop the full attack on Idlib without the consent of the two parties, and so was the S 400 deal with \$2.5 billion, which is attractive to Russia, especially during its economic crisis. Erdogan justified it by saying that more than half of the Turkish pilots were arrested after the failed attempted coup in mid-July 2016, and therefore, the Turkish Air Force does not have enough pilots capable of using all the F-16 fighter jets in Turkey's possession, and so it is in need of the advanced Russian S-400 deal to make up for the shortage in the pilots of warplanes, so Turkey can be safe in terms of air defense.

5- Russia was happy about the deal, as it focuses on gaining material advantages. The S-400 deal with Turkey is in the range of \$ 2.5 billion. Moscow wants to compensate for its losses due to the European-American sanctions and the boycott of many of them of the Russian oil and gas. This deal is a new bond between Russia and Turkey, and when Turkey put a condition to complete the joint production deal [the Turkish newspaper, Aksham, cited the Turkish Foreign Minister Mouloud Oglu's statement on Monday 9/10/2017 that his country may seek an agreement with another country to have a missile defense system if Russia did not agree to the joint production of the S-400 missiles system. (DW on 9/10/2017)]. Russia refused the joint production, so Turkey withdrew and agreed to the deal to stop the Russian attack on Idlib that Russia has actually launched [AFP - At least 28 civilians were killed on Friday/Saturday night in air raids on the town of Armanaz in the province of Idlib, which is among the areas of reducing tensions in north-west Syria, according to The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights there were 12 dead declared in a previous outcome announced by the Observatory on Friday evening ... Idlib province is a declared a de-escalation zone under the Astana agreement, yet it was attacked by Russia ... Rami Abdul Rahman, director of the Observatory pointed to: "The implementation of warplanes of a second raid targeted the town of Armanaz in the north-western Idlib district, the planes bombed the areas of the first raid, during the process of rescuing the wounded and lifting the stranded from the ruins of buildings destroyed by warplanes. The Observatory said on the other hand that 13 civilians were killed in bombardments in different areas of the province. Idlib province has been subjected to two weeks of Russian raids and other intensive Syrian raids ... (Gulf News on 30/09/2017)] and so the deal was held without joint production! Erdogan said on his return from a trip to Ukraine and Serbia, ["There will be no joint production of the first phase of the S-400 missiles, which will be purchased by his country", but in the second stage, "we will take steps on joint production..." and the S-400 is a sophisticated missiles capable of destroying targets from long distances, and the number of targets that can be followed simultaneously is three hundred, and the destruction of aircraft is between 3 and 240 kilometers, and can destroy all types of fighters and intercepting winged missiles ... Besides its destructive ability, the S-400 system only

needs five minutes to be ready for launch A, the Russian army is supplied with it since 2007 ... (Al Jazeera on 29/12/2017)].

6- Naturally, America took a calm position on the agreement, and was almost reserved, despite Turkey being a member of NATO. And the organization of weapons in the alliance is a Western organization and is incompatible with the weapons of Russia, especially the S400, which can penetrate the Western system in the alliance. But America and the Alliance have shown a lenient position for two factors: The first is that America needs Russia and Turkey to remain close to prevent Russia from attacking Idlib before the completion of the final American solution to the Syrian crisis. And the second is that America rules out the implementation of this deal as long as Turkey is in NATO. America does not allow Turkey to introduce a Russian system inside the Western system in NATO. For these two considerations, America had calm and near reserved position! [... Washington continues to insist on its reservation to Turkey's purchase of these missiles, and NATO believes that Turkey has the right to acquire weapons that helps it to maintain its security after Ankara announced that the main system will not be integrated into NATO systems ... (Asharq Al-Awsat 28 /12/2017)].

7- As a result of the deal, relations between Russia and Turkey have flourished markedly and the Idlib Front has been relatively quiet. Russia believed that this friendship and joint talks with Turkey would hasten a solution that could get Russia out of its predicament. But the situation lasted for about a year until late 2018. And nothing changed in Russia's predicament. America did not pay serious attention to the talks that were taking place, especially in Astana, but attended them as an observer, such as Jordan, or represented by its ambassador in Kazakhstan! Russia is aware that there is no solution if America does not participate seriously. It seems that Russia realized the American game and decided to attack Idlib. Because of its stupidity of thinking, it thought that Turkey will stand with it, but was surprised of its rejection and then it returned its forces to the barracks! We explained this in a previous answer on 22/9/2018: [When the armed Syrian revolution was squashed in Idlib, Russia wanted to continue its military operations; thus, it mobilized forces, and conducted military exercises in the Mediterranean, with large battleships and strategic air launchers, and closed airspace in the eastern Mediterranean for the first time in its history. It found itself in great trouble; Russia discovered things that it did not anticipate, including:

A- Turkey did not agree to a comprehensive war on Idlib. (The Turkish minister considered that the "terrorists" should be identified and fought, and it is not right to launch a full-scale war on Idlib and bombard it indiscriminately) l'nab Baladi 14/8/2018. Turkey's opposition to the war was clearly demonstrated during the Tehran conference between the presidents of Russia, Turkey and Iran. Turkey, in a surprise manner to Russia, highlighted its fears of the war against Idlib and the influx of refugees to it. It embarrassed Russia by considering the war as a tool to eliminate the political solution in Syria. [Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish President said on Friday that the continuing attacks on the province of Idlib, controlled by the opposition, will lead to the collapse of the political process in Syria ... (Al-Youm As-Sabi' 7/9/2018)]. And then with the rise of the American tone against the Russian efforts to the war on Idlib, Turkey has filled the points of control in Idlib with weapons; those points established within the agreement to reduce the escalation with the Russian and Iranian, [field sources and witnesses told Sky News Arabia, Sunday, a Turkish military convoy headed to the city of Idlib, adjacent to the border with Turkey, controlled by the Syrian opposition factions and other groups. The sources said that the Turkish military convoy entered the Syrian territory from the Kafr Lusin crossing towards Idlib and its countryside, north of Syria, it contained tanks, military equipment and was carrying ammunition ... (Sky News Arabia 09/09/2018)].

Thus, Turkey has become an obstacle to the Russian ambition to eliminate the military factions in Idlib. Because of this, it took a second meeting between Erdogan and Putin on 16/9/2018 in Sochi, i.e. just nine days after their meeting in Tehran.

B- Thus, the US wants Russia to remain stuck in Syria, unable to get out of it until America completes the implementation of the political solution according to its plans.

Russia has become aware of this American policy, and perhaps realized the implication of America involving it in Syria. It is really stuck in it and cannot exit except with the permission of

America which has all the tools of influence in Syria. This is why it could not complete the attack it prepared for to end the crisis in Idlib in its way because Turkey objected (pushed by America) and Iran remained silent. Thus, the meeting of Iran on 7/9/2018 failed to approve Russia's plan to attack Idlib and end the crisis in Russia's way. It has only been a few days since the Erdogan-Putin meeting and the attack was replaced by the establishment of a demilitarized zone!

This was by the American blessing. Novosti news agency quoted an American official on 18/9/2018 saying to the agency: ["We welcome and encourage Russia and Turkey to take practical steps to prevent the military attack from the government of Assad and its allies on the province of Idlib..." The Russian president said at the conclusion of his meeting with his Turkish counterpart in the Russian resort of Sochi: "We agreed the establishment of a "demilitarized zone" with the depth of 15 and 20 kilometers along the contact line, starting on October 1^{5th} of this year". The Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Shweigo, told Russian agencies that this agreement will prevent the attack expected for days on the last stronghold of the factions in Syria. In response to a question on whether this agreement means that there will be no military attack on Idlib, the minister replied "yes", according to the agencies Interfax and Tass. In contrast, Erdogan said at the press conference after the meeting between the two presidents: "Russia will take the necessary steps to ensure that there is no attack on the de-escalation zone in Idlib." (France 24 / AFP 17/09/2018)]. Thus, Russia stopped its shelling of Idlib and returned its ships, which conducted the military exercises in the Mediterranean. That is, the interest of Turkey and the US behind it to stop Russia's attack on Idlib was primarily for the benefit of America and not to prevent the regime from reaching Idlib or to protect civilians, but rather at the time that America enforces the solution that it wants and subject Russia to it. Then, they will not be concerned of the blood of Idlib, civilians or non-civilians, demilitarized or non-demilitarized, and their history speaks of this in different areas of Syria, and their crimes are well known...] End quote.

8- And thus, America was reassured of the success of its plan and that Turkey is able to thwart any Russian attack on Idlib before the completion of the American solution to the Syrian crisis; that America finds a new agent to succeed the current one and who has the acceptance of the current opposition and this naturally requires to keep the opposition in Idlib to negotiate with the regime to approve the new rule according to the American plan, Accordingly, America has no need for Turkey's cooperation with Russia. Russia is no longer able to mobilize crowds and attack Idlib, and thus, this is the reason why America remained silent over the Turkish-Russian S400 deal. Thus, America's hard-line and threatening attitudes to Turkey if it ratifies the deal as a missile system of Russia within the Western NATO system, and the American positions against the deal became strict. When it was soft when it was first held, it changed because America needed Turkish rapprochement with Russia when the contract agreement took place in 2017, but this need ended in 2019.

9- Among these hard-line positions announced:

A- (US and NATO officials warned Ankara that the Russian system cannot be integrated into the missile system of the alliance and that the purchase of the S-400 will weaken the possibility of Turkey's acquisition of F-35 fighters from the US, "Lockheed Martin", and may lead to sanctions from the Washington side ... Sky News Arabia 26/2/2019)

B- (Defense Ministry spokesman Charles Summers announced on Friday 8/3/2019 that Turkey could face serious consequences if it bought the Russian counter-system, and added at a news conference in the Pentagon : ["If Turkey takes the S400s there will be grave consequences in terms of our military relationship with them and with the Patriots and the F-35s," (DW 8/3/2019.)]

C- (A US State Department official said on Tuesday that the United States had told Turkey that if it continues to proceed in the S-400 deal, it would threaten its participation in the F-35 program and would threaten any future arms deal with Washington. In the first US action to prevent the delivery of F-35s to Turkey, a Pentagon spokesman said on Monday that the United States had stopped shipping equipment connected to these aircrafts to Ankara ... Two sources told Reuters that US officials told their Turkish counterparts in the past few days that they will not receive other shipments of equipment related to F-35 which are essential to the arrival of

which is needed to prepare for the arrival of the stealth aircraft manufactured by Lockheed Martin. A spokesman for the Pentagon, Lt. Col. Mike Andrews, said in a statement: "Pending an unequivocal Turkish decision to forgo delivery of the S-400, deliveries and activities associated with the stand-up of Turkey's F-35 operational capability have been suspended," Al-Arabiya Net 2/4/2019)

D- (US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Paladino said that Washington was seriously concerned about the deal, and he stressed that there was a possible rethink about the joint production of F-35s with Turkey as well as any future arms deals. He also mentioned that the State and private institutions and individuals involved in the purchase of the S400 may be subject to possible sanctions under the CAATSA Act. Kurdstreet on 11/3/2019).

10- The expectation of ratifying the deal ranges between the following possibilities:

A- Turkey decides not to proceed with the deal because of its close political and economic ties with America, and to compensate it with the purchase of tactical weapons, such as helicopters, from Russia instead of the S-400 deal. Such tactical weapons will not receive hostile reaction from NATO or America. Then Turkey will receive defence equipments for its security. Acting US Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan told reporters at the Pentagon on Tuesday: ["I expect we'll solve the problem so that they have the right defense equipment in terms of Patriots and F-35s." (Al Arabiya Net on 2/4/2019)].

B- The Americans offer the "Greek solution," that is, putting the Russian missiles in storage and leaving them to rust in exchange for the purchase of Patriot batteries from the United States, which cost \$3 and a half billion. The backdrop of the story of the Russian missiles in Greece is that Moscow sold them originally to Cyprus, which paid for it, but Ankara's strong objections forced Athens to keep them to avoid a serious crisis with Turkey. Which means that the Turks will pay this amount in addition to two and a half billion dollars for Russian missiles! Certainly this suits Donald Trump, but its high cost will put the Turkish government in the face of the Turkish opposition's attack, which will have the right to accuse the government of wasting the Turkish people's money due to the government's foreign policy mistakes.

C- This system could be sent to a third country such as India to avoid Russia's anger, which is also in line with America's strategy to encircle China.

It seems that the most likely possibility is the first (point A), since it is noted that the current statements from the parties to the case paving the way for such a thing, for example the above-mentioned Shanahan statement on 2/4/2019, as well as the statement of the Russian Deputy Prime Minister for Military Industrialization: [There is no fear that Turkey could drop its deal on the S-400. (Al Jazeera on 3/4/2019)]. And also what was reported by Al Jazeera on the same day 3/4/2019: [the Chairman of the Defence Committee of the Russian Duma, Vladimir Shamanov, did not rule out the possibility of Turkey's abandonment of the S-400 missile system deal with Russia ... (Al Jazeera Net on 3/4/2019)], and also what was quoted by Al Arabiya Al Hadath Alyoum 4/4/2019: (Turkey calls for a working group with Washington to discuss the dangers of the Russian missile system S400). All this makes the first possibility likely, of not ratifying the missile deal with Russia, that is, to cancel the deal.

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