



United States Department of State

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

March 17, 2022

The Honorable  
Frank Pallone  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Pallone:

Thank you for your February 4 letter regarding reports of Turkey's request to upgrade its F-16 fleet. The Department of State is committed to carrying out U.S. export control laws with all our defense trade partners and to implementing the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) sanctions imposed in December 2020 in response to Turkey's S-400 transaction with Russia. The Department continues to urge Turkey at every level to not retain the S-400 system and has made clear that any new major Russian arms purchases would risk triggering mandatory CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in December 2020.

Turkey is a longstanding NATO Ally with the second largest military in the Alliance. It is an active contributor to NATO missions including most recently in Eastern Europe, the Black Sea, the Balkans, and Afghanistan. Turkey's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and cooperative defense relations are an important deterrent to malign influence in the region. There are very real challenges in U.S.-Turkey relations, however, and we will continue to stress to Ankara the importance of maintaining interoperability with the Alliance and utilizing its military capabilities to bolster NATO efforts and advance our mutual goals, while continuing to hold the Erdogan government accountable for actions contrary to our interests.

Turkey's removal from the F-35 program – including its substantial lost economic benefits from co-production – as well as ongoing CAATSA sanctions represent a significant price paid for its decision to acquire the S-400. The Administration believes that there are nonetheless compelling long-term NATO Alliance unity and capability interests, as well as U.S. national security, economic, and commercial

interests that are supported by appropriate U.S. defense trade ties with Turkey. While every potential arms transfer is individually evaluated, as a general rule, the Department encourages Allies to purchase military equipment from the United States.

The proposed sale will require a Congressional notification if the Department of State were to approve it. We affirm our commitment to established defense trade authorization procedures, including Congressional oversight and the Conventional Arms Transfer policy. We look forward to providing additional information should it becomes available.

We hope that this information is useful to you and welcome the opportunity to brief you on these issues further. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naz Durakoglu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Naz Durakoglu  
Senior Bureau Official  
Bureau of Legislative Affairs