

Norway Signs Arms Trade with US in Anti-Russian Paranoia

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A recent agreement between the Norwegian armed forces and the US for the purchase of missiles starts a new stage in bilateral military cooperation. Although it is a Norway's right to seek better equipment for its troops, it is undeniable that such an initiative arises as a response to the fallacious discourse about the existence of a supposed "Russian threat", which may sound dangerous in the midst of the current global wave of tensions.

Both sides signed an agreement for the acquisition by Norway of medium-range AMRAAM-D aerial missiles. The aim would be to improve the performance of Norwegian F-35 fighters. These fighters are widely recognized as one of the main pillars of the country's armed forces, but they need to be modernized in their equipment to continue executing a satisfactory combat function. It is estimated that the value of the agreement exceeds 500 million dollars, which makes this the largest military contract ever made by the Norwegian state in its entire history.

During a press conference, spokespersons for the Norwegian Ministry of Defense praised the agreement. They said that Oslo's military authorities hope this cooperation will make the new Norwegian fighters fleet the country's main weapon for the decades to come. Eivind Byre, lieutenant colonel and head of the Air Force's communication center, stated that the fighters will now carry out their activities with maximum operational capability, considering the high power represented by the AMRAAM-D missiles.

"We are very pleased that Norway now also has access to such advanced missiles", Defense Minister Bjørn Arild Gram himself emphasized to Norwegian media, adding that, in his opinion, acquiring such weapons is "particularly important in light of the current security policy situation".

It is important to mention that these missiles until then had only been exported from the US to extremely close partners, such as Canada, Australia and the UK. The fact that Norway

was able to successfully negotiate these weapons demonstrates that Washington currently sees Oslo as an important and reliable ally, thus justifying the sending of some of its most important equipment.

The AMRAAM-D missiles are an improved version of the projectiles previously used by the F-16 and NASAMS air defense systems. With more advanced engineering, the AMRAAM-D includes better data control, sensors, and range. The weapons are expected to act incisively against targets such as modern drones, cruise missiles and other combat aircraft.

In addition to the AMRAAM-D agreement, an industrial cooperation pact was also signed between the American military company Raytheon and several private Norwegian defense groups. The contract will significantly boost the Scandinavian country's military industry, creating new production and value-adding facilities for military items.

This deepening of the countries' bilateral military relations has been happening in a notorious way in recent times, considering that previously Norway had already bought dozens of F-35 fighters from the US, promoting the almost total replacement of its aging F-16 fleet – which is about to be completed by 2025. Now, with the agreement for the sale of the missiles that will equip such aircraft, it is possible to see that there is indeed an American willingness to improve the Norwegian military power, which is possible to be understood when we analyze the current international situation.

As well as other European countries – and mainly Scandinavian ones –, Norway has strongly adhered to the anti-Russian paranoia encouraged by the US. Discourses such as the one about a “Russian threat” or the unfounded belief in the existence of a “Russian expansionism” in Western Europe have already become commonplace among authorities in most European countries, including Norway. This leads them to take “preventive” measures, seeking to raise their military potential to face these supposed (non-existent) risks.

Norway has repeatedly demonstrated this willingness to increase cooperation with the US in order to neutralize the “Russian threat”. This is particularly evident with the high level of US-Norway cooperation in the Arctic, a region of high strategic interest to NATO and where Russia has historically maintained military hegemony. In fact, as Norway is a partner country geographically close to Arctic Russia, it is advantageous for the US to place the largest possible number of weapons and troops there, advancing its project of “encirclement” against the Russian strategic environment.

As Norway prepares to face non-existent dangers, it becomes a real danger itself. The more NATO weapons and troops occupy the country, the more unsafe it becomes for Russia and will force Moscow to increase its deterrence activities. In fact, for peace to reach Europe, the most interesting thing is for local countries to significantly reduce their cooperation with the US and adopt a neutral stance towards Russia.

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