

# Russia-Saudi Relations: Putin's S-400 Sales Pitch to Saudi Arabia

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

Global Research, September 17, 2019

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

*Those surprised by President Putin's S-400 sales pitch to Saudi Arabia earlier this week while speaking in Ankara alongside his Turkish and Iranian counterparts clearly haven't been following the rapid development of Russian-Saudi relations and are likely influenced by the discredited dogma spread by the Alt-Media Community which pretends that Russia is somehow just as strongly "against" Saudi Arabia as it supposedly is against "Israel" too, which isn't true whatsoever and therefore deserves to be thoroughly debunked.*

President Putin surprised many when he made a S-400 sales pitch to Saudi Arabia while speaking in Ankara alongside his Turkish and Iranian counterparts in response to a question about the latest regional developments, especially seeing as how this was preceded by him quoting a passage from the Quran (which begins at 42:26 in this [English voiced-over video](#) from RT's Ruptly) emphasizing the religious righteousness of self-defense to protect one's people. Importantly, he also quoted that Holy Book to make a plea for peace between all warring parties, which in a sense builds upon the impassioned defense that Rouhani made of the Yemeni people right before Putin's speech but then took it in a drastically different direction after he used the opportunity to promote Russia's "[military diplomacy](#)" with the Wahhabi Kingdom on the presumed basis that the Saudis are the victims — not the aggressors that Rouhani just said they were — who therefore require the S-400s in order to defend themselves and their infrastructure after [last weekend's Ansarullah drone strike](#).

The Iranian delegation responded by literally laughing out loud ([43:35](#)), either at the boldness of this sales pitch and/or out of how uncomfortable they felt that Putin would use the Quran to indirectly contradict them on Yemen (though RT [curiously interpreted](#) this as "admonishing the Saudi coalition's war on Yemen") and then proceed to use the second passage he quoted to segue into his S-400 sales pitch to Saudi Arabia. Whatever the reason behind their smiles may be, there's no denying that this was an unprecedented outreach to a country that had long been regarded as one of Russia's regional rivals, to say nothing of its present status as an enemy of both Putin's Turkish hosts and their mutual Iranian partners. Unbeknownst to many except the wonks who closely follow Russian-Saudi relations, the two sides have been in the process of a rapidly developing rapprochement as part of Moscow's 21st-century grand strategy of becoming the [supreme "balancing" force](#) in Afro-Eurasia and are at the brink of a strategic partnership ahead of Putin's [planned trip there](#) next month.

In fact, the Saudi King paid his first-ever visit to Moscow in October 2017 in the clearest sign yet that the times are changing, which the author elaborated on in his analysis at the time rhetorically asking "[Is Saudi Arabia's Grand Strategy Shifting?](#)" The reason for such a

headline is that [Sputnik](#) reported that the two parties signed agreements to purchase not just the S-400s, but also “Kornet-EM anti-tank missile systems, TOS-1A ‘Buratino’ heavy flame systems, AGS-30 grenade launchers, and Kalashnikov AK-103 assault rifles”, with the same publicly financed international media outlet [also reporting](#) that the TOS-1A rocket launchers have already been delivered as of earlier this year and can reasonably be assumed to have been deployed for use against the Ansarullah in Yemen. It needs to be noted that Russia supports the internationally recognized but Saudi-based Hadi government, not the Ansarullah, and even [withdrew its diplomats](#) from the Yemeni capital that’s under their control in late 2017 two months after the Saudi King’s visit after the group killed former President Saleh.

Demonstrating Russia’s increasingly close alignment with the official Saudi position towards Yemen, it joined the US in condemning the Ansarullah’s missile strikes in March 2018 carried out on the third anniversary of the war, and the author analyzed in his piece at the time that [“Russia couldn’t have asked for a better advertisement of its S-400 defensive weaponry”](#) after video footage emerged of American Patriot systems failing to intercept the incoming projectiles. That said, while the S-400s are extremely effective for stopping enemy missiles, they’re practically useless against much tinier drones that are better thwarted by the [Pantsir system](#) instead, which is why it almost defies belief that Putin would make a S-400 sales pitch to Saudi Arabia after last weekend’s attack when he should obviously know that. With this in mind, it can be concluded that he simply saw an opportunity to make a globally publicized sales pitch when asked about last weekend’s attack at the Ankara Summit, so he threw in some Quranic passages for maximum viral effect ahead of next month’s trip.

Considering the insistence with which Putin was pushing the S-400s as the ideal solution to Saudi Arabia’s recent security threats (having symbolically said in the same respect that Russia’s sales of this system and its predecessor to Turkey and Iran respectively have also succeeded in ensuring their security too), there’s every reason to believe that he might clinch such a big-ticket deal during his upcoming visit to the Wahhabi Kingdom. Unlike the discredited dogma regularly spread by the [Alt-Media Community](#), Russia and Saudi Arabia are on excellent terms with one another and are drawing closer by the day despite what some might want to “wishfully” believe. After the fallout of the Khashoggi case (where the West condemned the Kingdom but [Russia supported it](#)) and the [“hearty handshake”](#) that Putin had with MBS shortly thereafter at the G20 Summit in Argentina, it’s self-evident that [Russia is trying to save the Crown Prince’s reputation](#) because [“It Turns Out That Saudi Arabia Isn’t Exactly An American Puppet After All”](#) following the Moscow-Riyadh rapprochement.

It’s trendy to think that Russia is “against” the US’ traditional partners such as Saudi Arabia and especially [“Israel”](#), but in reality it’s doing its utmost to “poach” them from America’s grasp and replace Washington as their top strategic partner in order to restore “balance” to regional affairs according to Moscow’s envisaged end game. It’s precisely because of the adverse zero-sum impact that Russia’s two new aforementioned partnerships have on Iranian interests that Alt-Media (which largely stands in solidarity with Iran’s officially stated political goals against Saudi Arabia & “Israel” but inexplicably imagines that the Russian state does too [despite much evidence to the contrary](#)) usually puts forth a [“No true Scotsman...”](#) (or in this case, Russian) argument to pretend like none of this is happening because they can’t countenance the thought of Russia [actively “balancing” Iran](#) by wanting to sell Saudi Arabia S-400s for neutralizing the Islamic Republic’s legendary missile stockpile and allowing “Israel” to strike the IRGC and Hezbollah in Syria with impunity, though all

objective observers should realize that the times have certainly changed and none of this should be surprising.

\*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

*This article was originally published on [OneWorld](#).*

*Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.*

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Andrew Korybko](#), Global Research, 2019

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Andrew Korybko](#)

#### About the author:

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)