

Turkey: NATO's Anti Ballistic Missile System: "May be deployed against either Iran or Russia"

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Turkey preparing for NATO ABM system

ANKARA, Turkey: Despite initial doubts about NATO's anti-ballistic missile system, Turkey has begun technical studies of the system.

Turkish officials expressed concern that the system may be deployed against either Iran or Russia, two countries with which Turkey has increasingly close relations, Today's Zaman newspaper reported Wednesday.

Turkey has, despite its doubts, begun technical studies on the X-Band radars in preparation for a possible NATO decision on deployment of the system during a NATO summit in Portugal on Nov. 19-20.

The core of the possible dispute is that Turkey maintains that the planned NATO anti-missile system shouldn't be perceived as a threat against any of its eastern or northern neighbors, which include Iran or Russia, as its economic and political relations with both have increased.

That position puts Ankara increasingly at odds with Washington's policies, which have consistently maintained that Turkey approve hosting the ABM system as part of the Europe-wide anti-ballistic missile defensive shield.

Citing national security concerns, Turkey has asked U.S. officials whether non-NATO countries would have access to intelligence that the X-Band radar sensors gather.

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