As Russian missile & drone attacks continue, Zelenskyy asks for more Patriot missiles. Trump offers license, then changes mind.

A Patriot Missile System firing an interceptor missile..

Last week President Zelenskyy flew to Washington for the funeral of Sen. Lindsey Graham and met with President Trump at the White House prior to the ceremony. On arriving for the meeting, Zelenskyy said, “the number one priority is anti-ballistic defense and strategic cooperation with America. Peace needs to be brought closer.” Following the meeting, he said in a post on X, “A good meeting with President Trump at the Oval Office. Thank you for everything we do together to protect the lives of Ukrainians and advance peace. The President and I discussed license for Patriot interceptor production and several other ideas that could help.”

At the NATO summit meeting in Ankara in early July, Trump had said the U.S. would give Ukraine a license to produce Patriot interceptor missiles for the Patriot air defense systems it now has. But on Friday during a Cabinet meeting, he appeared to back away from that commitment, saying he had not yet made a final decision on the matter and that the advanced technology in the Patriot missile “is a hard thing to give away,” adding that the country that gets it “could someday turn on you. You have to be very careful.” He said the U.S. and Ukraine were “still talking about it.”

On Friday, in the wake of Wednesday night’s barrage of Russian missiles and drones, President Zelenskyy repeated his urgent plea for more Patriot interceptor missiles: “Every package of ballistic missile interceptors saves the lives of our people. And every night without them results in more casualties,” he wrote on X. He said he had spoken with Vice President Vance and had discussed his meeting with President Trump earlier in the week – a meeting he described as “positive and productive.” But in a post on Telegram, he made it clear that Ukraine needs more Patriot interceptor missiles: “The Russian air strikes on our country continue and air defense, specifically interceptors for Patriot systems against ballistic missiles, remains a top priority.”

But for whatever reason, President Trump apparently has now decided not to give Ukraine a license to produce the interceptor missiles. Whether it is because the two American firms that produce them – Lockheed Martin and Raytheon – are opposed to the U.S. giving the license to Ukraine, which would presumably give it to one or more Ukrainian firms, and would prefer that the U.S. order more interceptor missiles from them that could then be provided to Ukraine, or whether there are fears that, if Ukraine received the license, the technical features that make the Patriot interceptor missiles effective could fall into Russian hands, is unclear. But the bottom line, as of today, is that Ukraine won't get the Patriot interceptor missile license despite the fact that it badly needs more Patriot interceptor missiles.

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