

Turkey “allows” Sweden into NATO

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After long procedural delays, Turkey has finally given its approval for Sweden to join NATO as a full member. According to *Anadolu* agency on 23.01.2024, the Grand National Assembly (Parliament) of Turkey voted in favor of the relevant bill with 287 votes “for” and 55 votes “against”. The document must be sent to President R. Erdogan for his signature.

As a result, Hungary remains the only member of the Alliance that did not approve Sweden's membership. On the day of the Turkish parliamentary vote, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban invited his Swedish counterpart, Ulf Kristersson, to visit Budapest for talks on Sweden's accession to NATO. It can be assumed that the Hungarian authorities are trying to obtain certain preferences from Sweden, as well as from other members of the Alliance, following the example of Turkey, which has apparently already reached an agreement with the Alliance, and especially with the United States, on the price of the deal.

It is not only about the package of modernization of the Turkish F-16 fighter fleet, the final agreement on which, according to some reports, was reached during the visit of the U.S. Secretary of the State Anthony Blinken to Istanbul on January 6. It can be assumed that Ankara demanded from the U.S. a number of other preferences that are not directly under the jurisdiction of the North Atlantic bloc, including the prolongation of the “grain deal” on the most favorable terms for Turkey, Western financial assistance and the easing of banking sanctions against Turkey in connection with financial transactions with Russian capital, limitation of Washington's military and political support for “Kurdish separatism”, and so on.

It is not yet known exactly what Ankara has contributed to its assets because of negotiations on the above-mentioned tracks, nevertheless, the decision of the TR parliament in one way or another indicates that Turkey's resources, which allowed it to resist US pressure and maneuver between the interests of NATO and Russia, have already been exhausted. It should also be considered that Ankara is closely monitoring the situation in Ukraine and taking into account the unfavorable realities for Kiev. If the disagreements in the NATO bloc over Sweden and other issues continue, it is likely that soon the Russian army will be able to wrest the Nikolayev and Odessa regions from Kiev, thus upsetting the balance of power in the strategic Black Sea region. And Turkey is hardly prepared to let that happen, therefore, its motives for choosing to stand with NATO are obvious.