

U.S. to sell Arab countries \$8 billion in weapons without congressional approval



Washington, May 27 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump is invoking a rare executive provision bypassing congressional review in order to extend a multi-billion dollar arms sale to Saudi Arabia.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made the announcement, citing alleged threats from Iran to the Saudi kingdom. Using the Arms Export Control Act, \$8.1 billion in ammunition, bombs, precision-guided munitions and military support are being sent to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates.

The U.S. secretary of state said the decision was fueled by an existing emergency which requires the immediate sale of weapons in order to deter further the malign influence of the government of Iran throughout the Middle East region. Pompeo also said that the transfers must occur as quickly as possible in order to deter further Iranian adventurism in the Gulf and throughout the Middle East.

Sen. Chris Murphy, Connecticut's Democratic representative, said that President Trump is only using this loophole because he knows Congress would disapprove of this sale. There is no new emergency reason to sell bombs to the Saudis.

Democratic New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez also criticized the move, citing no practical or legal reason justifying the executive decision, outside of an alleged threat from Iran. Menendez said: "I am disappointed, but not surprised, that the Trump administration has failed once again to prioritize our long term national security interests or stand up for human rights, and instead is granting favors to authoritarian countries like Saudi Arabia."

The arms sale comes just hours after Trump announced his plans to send 1,500 additional troops to the region as a response for an unspecified threat from Iran.

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