

U.S. to Sell \$5.4 Billion Worth of Patriot Missiles to Saudi Arabia



Washington, August 1 (RHC)-- The U.S. Department of Defense says it has received the State Department's approval to sell \$5.4 billion worth of Patriot missiles to Saudi Arabia. According to reports, Saudi Arabia has been seeking to purchase 600 Patriot Advanced Capability-3, Cost-Reduction Initiative Missiles with containers, built by Lockheed Martin.

The proposed sales of Patriot interceptor missiles to Saudi Arabia, and aircraft counter-measure systems to the United Arab Emirates, were approved by the State Department. U.S. officials said the Foreign Military Sales program, which has a combined worth of over \$5.7 billion, would "contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States" by helping key allies.

"The proposed sale will modernize and replenish Saudi Arabia's current Patriot missile stockpile, which is becoming obsolete and difficult to sustain due to age and limited availability of repair parts," the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said.

Saudi Arabia was the world's largest importer of weapons in 2014, mainly purchasing arms from the United States, according to an arms trade report. The Global Defense Trade Report says that Saudi Arabia spent over \$6.4 billion on weapons purchases in 2014, putting India in second place. Over the past year, the Saudi kingdom increased its arms imports by 54 percent.

Meanwhile, the United States has been the biggest beneficiary of the rising Middle Eastern weapons market, with \$8.4 billion of arms exports to the region last year, up from \$6 billion in 2013. Worldwide, the U.S. arms exports surged 19 percent to \$23.7 billion, accounting for one-third of all weapons exports.

On a global scale, trade in military hardware increased for a sixth consecutive year in 2014, pushing worldwide imports to \$64.4 billion from \$56 billion.

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