

MEMMO

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Congress Must Examine Impact of Saudi Arms Sale

The Trump administration's announcement that the United States will sell Saudi Arabia over \$110 billion of arms over the next decade raises serious policy concerns. As the administration forwards its proposals, Congress must closely examine the implications of the sale and ensure that the package serves America's national security interests. Congress must also ensure preservation of Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME), as required by law.

The scale of the arms sale is unprecedented.

- The sale comprises the largest arms deal in American history. Initially valued at \$110 billion, overall sales could total as much as \$350 billion over the next decade.
- The sale could dwarf Israel's defense spending over the same period, including the \$38 billion in pledged U.S. security assistance.
- Most specific items intended for the sale have yet to be announced. It apparently includes some items previously announced as part of \$115 billion in arms sales proposed during the Obama administration.
- The package also apparently includes new sophisticated systems like the THAAD missile interceptor, vast quantities of precision munitions, and upgrades to existing systems.



The proposed Saudi arms sale is the largest in American history. (AP/Evan Vucci)

Congress must closely scrutinize the deal.

- Congress must demand concrete assurances that the sale will not undermine Israel's QME—the ability of the Jewish state to defeat any credible conventional military threat by itself.
- Congress must ensure that Saudi capabilities are oriented toward the threats that Iran and other radical regimes pose to the Kingdom.
- Congress must ensure the administration closely consults with Israel on the sale and takes into account its concerns—including the provision of equipment or countermeasures necessary for Israel to maintain its QME.
- Congress should examine what impact the sheer quantity of arms being sold to Saudi Arabia will have on Israel's QME.
- Congress should create a mechanism to memorialize any American or Saudi assurances associated with the sale and ensure they are adhered to.