

Congressman Rothman Co-Sponsors a Joint Resolution of Disapproval to Stop Arms Sale to Saudis

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"It is not enough to put conditions on the Bush Administration's deal to give Saudis new, highly advanced weapons. Congress must stop the sale completely," says Rothman.

(Washington, DC)—This week, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) co-sponsored a Joint Resolution of Disapproval to stop the Bush Administration from selling \$123 million in advanced weapons and military technology to Saudi Arabia, a known sponsor and financier of terrorism. The sale is proposed as part of a larger \$20 billion arms package, but the inclusion of 900 Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) in that deal is at the heart of the controversy.

In the wrong hands, JDAM technology is especially dangerous because it transforms unguided conventional bombs into weapons with highly accurate targeting capabilities. It will vastly improve the Royal Saudi Air Force's ability to hit targets on the ground in all weather conditions.

"Selling sophisticated weapons to Saudi Arabia goes completely against the national security interests of the United States. Saudi Arabia is one of the top financiers of terrorism around the world, the homeland for seventy percent of the most-wanted international terrorists, and the financial backer for thousands of madrassas around the world that preach hatred of America, Christians, and Jews. There is no guarantee that weapons sold to the Saudis won't ultimately be turned against our troops or Israel," said Rothman.

If this \$123 million sale goes forward, it would be the first time the United States has sold sophisticated and deadly JDAM technology to Saudi Arabia. A Congressional letter sent to the President last November by Reps. Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Christopher Carney (D-PA) requested certain conditions on the sale, but it did not ask the Administration to stop it. In light of this weakness, Congressman Rothman refused to sign the letter and instead urges his colleagues to focus their efforts on passing the Joint Resolution of Disapproval to stop the deal.

"It is not enough to simply condition the sale, when we know the current Saudi regime is unstable and may not be in charge of what is ultimately done with these weapons in the future. We must stop the sale completely and this Joint Resolution of Disapproval is the way to do it. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution and call on the House Foreign Affairs Committee to consider it without delay," said Rothman.

Under the Arms Control Export Act of 1976, the President is required to officially notify Congress of an impending arms deal. Congress has the authority to reject any arms sale. Congress received notification on Monday of this week and Members then introduced their Joint Resolution of Disapproval on Tuesday. This action triggers a 30-day review of the arms sale.

The Joint Resolution of Disapproval of the Bush Administration's proposed arms package for Saudi Arabia already has the support of 53 Members of Congress, but needs more if it is to effectively halt the deal.

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