



**Statement of Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX)  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

*“Hearing: What Emergency? Arms Sales and the Administration’s Dubious End- Run around Congress”*

June 12, 2019

Remarks as Prepared

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Make no mistake, the Iranian regime is our strategic enemy in the Middle East.

They are the number one state sponsor of terror in the world today. They have a brutal history of American bloodshed, from the Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon in 1983, to the deaths of over 600 U.S. service members from 2003 to 2011. They continue to hold American hostages, and plot against our allies in Europe.

Iran’s destabilizing behavior in the Middle East threatens that region, and is a growing threat to security of the United States, our military, and our citizens.

Just last week, Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, our top military commander in the region, warned about attacks by Iran or its proxies, stating: “I think the threat is imminent.”

Our allies in the region face this menace every day.

I fully support the efforts of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to defend themselves against Iran, including with U.S. arms and training. I support the efforts to combat the violent overthrow of a legitimate UN-backed government in Yemen by the Iran-backed Houthi rebels.



These rebels repeatedly launch missiles and armed drones into Saudi Arabia, threatening innocents, including Americans.

But I am also troubled by the numerous civilian deaths in this war, including from coalition airstrikes. I firmly believe that we can support our strategic partners while also insisting that they prosecute that war more responsibly. For this reason, I am working with Chairman Engel on legislation conditioning certain future arms sales, with the goal of helping stop civilian deaths.

We are here today because the State Department recently certified to Congress that the Iran threat constitutes an emergency, requiring the immediate provision of certain defense systems to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Jordan. This rarely used emergency authority bypassed Article I Congressional review of these sales. The Founding Fathers put Article I, which represents the American people, before Article II in the Constitution.

There have been times when international emergencies required expedited sales. For example, President George H.W. Bush used the emergency authority in the immediate wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. President Reagan made such a determination in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq war. In both of those cases, critical weapons were delivered quickly during hot wars.

But, as I said last month, the recent use of this emergency authority was unfortunate. Of note, some of these sales will not be ready for delivery for over a year. I would have preferred State to adhere to the formal statutory 30-day Congressional review process to expedite these 22 arms sales, where a Resolution of Disapproval process could have been an option.

However, I do share the Administration's frustration that some of these arms sales were on informal holds for over a year.



In your written statement, you have said that these arms sales are necessary to ensure the United States remains a credible supplier of choice for our partners, rather than Russia and China.

Last week, it was reported that Saudi Arabia has been buying ballistic missiles from China. While we are not discussing ballistic missile technology today, it is disturbing if our allies are deepening their defense relationships with our adversaries.

Assistant Secretary Cooper, thank you for your continued service to our country, and I look forward to hearing your views on the threat, the decision process in designating this an emergency, and details on these 22 sales.

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