

US missile sale to Saudi Arabia escalates tensions in Mideast: Analyst

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The possible sale a US missile system to Saudi Arabia will escalate tensions in the Middle East and benefit the American military-industrial complex, says a journalist and political commentator in Canada.

The US State Department's approval to sell 600 Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missiles to Riyadh "will force other countries to buy weapons to match them" and "you end up escalating things and it runs out of control," Edward Corrigan told Press TV on Thursday.



The potential multi-billion sale will cause "huge distortion in terms of the economy, in terms of money, in terms of campaign finances all coming from these large corporation that benefit from the military-industrial complex," Corrigan said.

"This is what President [Dwight] Eisenhower of the United States said back in the 1950s is the biggest threat to the United States and threat to democracy," he added.

On Wednesday, 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.

US 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.

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.

According to the Global Defense Trade Report, Saudi Arabia spent over \$6.4 billion on weapons purchases in 2014, putting India in the second place.

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 US arms exports surged 19 percent to \$23.7 billion, accounting for one-third of all weapons exports.