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(19)

BACKGROUND PAPER

SUBJECT: Status of Saudi AWACS Proposal

The Administration submitted to the Congress August 24 its proposal to sell to Saudi Arabia airborne early warning and aerial refueling aircraft and F-15 enhancement items. The \$8.5 billion air defense package consists of the following items:

- Five E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) Aircraft and associated support, spares, training and ground environment improvements (\$5.8 billion).
- 101 ship-sets of conformal fuel tanks (CFTs) for F-15s (\$10 million).
- Six KC-707 tankers (with an option for two more) (\$2.4 billion).
- 1,177 AIM-9L (Sidewinder) air-to-air missiles (\$200 million).

We recognize that Saudi acquisition of this equipment is of concern to Israel. However, the air defense package has been designed to meet legitimate Saudi defense requirements; it will have minimal impact on the Arab-Israeli balance. The security of the state of Israel has been and will continue to be a paramount interest of the US. How to present the AWACS case to the Israelis, and how to address their security concerns in the wake of the AWACS sale are not topics addressed here.

We have received four types of assurances from the Saudis, covering physical security, data sharing, restrictions on third party transfers, and restrictions on the area of operation.

The 20-day informal notification period will not begin until September 9 when Congress returns from recess. During the 30-day formal notification period which follows, both houses would have to pass resolutions disapproving the sale in order to block it.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

Date: 07 SEP 2013 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 U.S.C. § 552

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