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## Those "Moderate" Arab States Should the U.S. sell them advanced weaponry?

Should we sell sophisticated armaments to the so-called "moderate" Arab countries? Recently, Saudi Arabia, usually considered the leader of the "moderate" Arabs, turned to Britain for the biggest arms contract ever. Many are concerned that the U.S. Congress, being reluctant to allow unlimited arms sales to the Arabs, is depriving the U.S. of lucrative business.

### What are the facts?

■ The Arab states boast today one of the largest, most deadly and most sophisticated concentration of armament the world has ever seen, surpassed only (and not by all that much) by the arsenals of the two super-powers. And the buildup of arms continues incessantly—making one wonder how these essentially backward countries can possibly absorb and utilize all this weaponry. Excepting the oil-rich Gulf countries, most of these Arab states can fairly be described as economic basket cases, with social and demographic problems that seem almost unsolvable. Still, they dedicate a large share of their meager resources to the acquisition of ever more deadly and offensive weaponry, instead of putting them into the service of building their countries and uplifting their populations.

■ Saudi Arabia, the kingpin of the "moderates," is an immensely wealthy but sparsely populated country. It fields an army of only 72,000 men, but has 190 military planes and 550 tanks—just about the largest ratio of military hardware to military manpower in the world. Until recently, the fiction was maintained that it needed this enormous arsenal in order to defend itself against the "threat of Iran." But now that Iran is prostrate, this can no longer be alleged, and even the most naive no longer believe it. As King Khaled put it quite bluntly: "When we build our military power, we have no designs on anybody, except those who took away our land and the holy places in Jerusalem, and we know who they are!"

■ "Moderate" Saudi Arabia has participated in every war against Israel, from the birth of the state in 1948. It has never made peace with Israel. It is the principal paymaster of

Syria, Israel's most fervent enemy, and of the PLO, which is sworn to the destruction of Israel. It is the main player in the worldwide Arab boycott of Israel, whose purpose is the destruction of Israel's economy. Yet, Saudi Arabia, already armed to the teeth and beyond, has just acquired batteries of super missiles from China. They can reach every point in Israel within minutes and can be armed with chemical and atomic warheads. And Saudi Arabia has squadrons of fighter planes at its air base in Tobruk, just one minute's flying time from Israel.

■ But Saudi Arabia's "defense" needs are insatiable. It has just concluded an arms deal with Great Britain amounting to \$27 billion, the largest ever negotiated by that country. It includes at least 40 Tornado fighter planes, 80 Westland helicopters, a minimum of six Sundown minesweepers, the construction of two major air bases, and much more. It is an enormous package and has only one purpose: to be part of the coordinated force that, it is hoped, will eventually destroy Israel. The remarkable thing is that Britain will not sell any arms to Israel, because it feels that it could "destabilize the region."

■ But those bare statistics refer only to some of the so-called "moderates." Including the self-proclaimed non-moderates, tiny Israel, the size of New Jersey, with 90% of its population concentrated in an area the size of metropolitan Indianapolis, faces one of the most daunting and fearsome military machines the world has ever seen. Counting only Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Egypt, Israel faces 17,265 tanks, 2789 combat aircraft and 3 million armed men. And that is before the huge sale of military material by Britain, missile deals with the Chinese, and other weaponry in the pipeline.

The concept of the "moderate" Arab states is a myth. The Arabs are single-mindedly determined to destroy Israel. They are spending hundreds of billions of dollars in order to attain strategic superiority to Israel, and then to accomplish its destruction. Israel is the only viable strategic asset the United States has in the entire area. Those who sell weapons to Israel's enemies—foreign countries and American companies—are playing into the hands of America's enemies. We do not find the Soviet Union selling weapons to the enemies of its allies. Why should the United States be any less straightforward in its foreign policy? If Israel were vanquished, the Persian Gulf with its vital resources, the entire Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin would fall under the unquestioned dominion of the Soviet Union.

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