

Israel objects to planned U.S. arms sales

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Israel is objecting to White House plans to sell high-tech weaponry to Saudi Arabia and other Middle East allies.

Israel fears the arms sales would reduce its military superiority over its neighbors and have lobbied against it, U.S. officials told The New York Times.

Former Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz is among the Israelis who have visited Washington to argue against parts of the planned sales, which, one defense industry executive told the Times, includes some \$5 billion to \$10 billion in tanks, air defense systems and warships.

U.S. officials had planned to sell the military hardware to allies in the Persian Gulf to defend against Iran, and the Israeli objections complicate the plan, the Times reported.

Formal notification to Congress about the potential sales has been delayed until later this month, State Department sources told the newspaper. After notification Congress, where Israel has strong support, has 30 days to decide whether to block the sales.

One solution under consideration is a separate arms sale for Israel.

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