

Rice: U.S. eyeing Mideast arms package

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice Monday said a proposal for a massive arms sales package to the Mideast would soon be before the U.S. Congress. Rice said that the package would be focused on Saudi Arabia and its immediate neighbors and could potentially total \$20 billion if approved by Congress, The New York Times reported. The arms sales would represent part of an aid package to six Mideast states, including Egypt and Israel, aimed at ensuring regional security from Iran. Details of the package will be discussed by Rice and U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates when they visit the troubled region this week. News of the proposed arms sales was immediately condemned by a spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry. "America has always considered one policy in this region and that is creating fear and concerns in the countries of the region and trying to harm the good relations between these countries," spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini said. The Washington Post said among the weapons being offered in the package would be jet fighter upgrades, Joint Direct Attack Munitions and new naval vessels.

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