

New House Bill Would Increase Risks of U.S. Arms Sales Harming Critical U.S. Foreign Policy Goals

A statement from Transparency International U.S.

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Washington, D.C. – The U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee will be voting on a bill today to significantly reduce congressional oversight of U.S. arms sales abroad. If approved during the Committee’s [markup, H.R. 3613](#), the *Streamlining Foreign Military Sales Act of 2025*, would sharply increase the dollar thresholds that trigger congressional notification of proposed U.S. arms deals, allowing the Executive Branch to approve a far greater number of U.S. arms sales without congressional review.

Colby Goodman, Senior Researcher to TI US, released the following statement in advance of the Committee’s markup on the bill:

“This bill represents one of the largest rollbacks of congressional oversight on arms sales in the last 50 years. Congressional notifications are a vital safeguard—they have helped prevent U.S. weapons from being [diverted to criminal groups](#) and stemmed repressive violence. They provided important anti-corruption protections and reinforced the United States’ credibility as a responsible arms supplier.

This legislation follows lobbying by the U.S. defense industry to increase the dollar thresholds that trigger congressional notifications. In 2023, the Aerospace Industries Association [urged](#) Congress to tie notification thresholds to inflation. A 2024 Task Force [report](#) from the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee similarly noted that these thresholds haven’t been adjusted for inflation since 2003, and as a result, Congress took too long to review a “small number of Foreign Military Sale (FMS) cases.”

However, H.R. 3613 goes far beyond modest inflation adjustments in some cases. It would **more than quadruple** the notification threshold for sales of Major Defense Equipment to NATO+5 countries—from \$25 million to \$105 million—and **more than double** the threshold for all other countries—from \$14 million to \$30 million,

among other changes (see below table for more detail). These dramatic increases are far beyond what the Task Force recommended earlier.

If H.R. 3613 becomes law, Congress would lose visibility over deals like the [\\$21 million sale of Javelin guided missiles](#) to Qatar, [\\$21 million sale of Blackhawk Helicopters](#) to Jordan, [\\$24.9 million sale of Harpoon Missiles](#) to Thailand, and [\\$84 million sale of Small Diameter Bombs](#) to Romania—sales that deserve scrutiny, not secrecy.

Equally puzzling, the bill is unlikely to effectively address the reason for most delays in U.S. government approval and delivery of U.S. weapons. Many U.S. lawmakers have [pointed out](#) that bureaucratic holdups stem largely from within the Executive Branch, not from Congress. U.S. defense companies' manufacturing capacity are a key reason why U.S. allies do not receive their weapons on time.

In an era of heightened global conflict and shifting alliances, the U.S. Congress needs to provide more, not less, oversight to ensure the United States is not unknowingly drawn into a protracted armed conflict or harming alliances due to corruption in arms sales. We urge the Committee to reject this bill or significantly scale back the proposed threshold increases.”

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TI US is part of the world's largest coalition against corruption. In collaboration with national chapters in more than 110 countries, through research, policy development, and advocacy, we are leading the fight to turn our vision of a world free from corruption into reality.

Related Resources

- Read a [blog post](#) on past congressional attempts to decrease oversight of congressional notifications in U.S. arms sales;
- Read why transparency in U.S. arms sales is urgently needed in [Strategic Asset Sidelined: Transparency in Commercial Arms Exports](#);
- Read about the importance of congressional reviews of [U.S. defense company offset deals](#) in connection with major U.S. arms sales; and,
- Read [Holes In The Net: US Arms Export Control Gaps In Combatting Corruption](#).

See Proposed Changes in Dollar Threshold Values for Congressional Notifications

| Destination | Type of transaction | <i>Major Defense Equipment (Current)</i> | <i>Major Defense Equipment (Proposed)</i> | <i>Defense Articles (Current)</i> | <i>Defense Articles (Proposed)</i> | <i>Design and Construction (Current)</i> | <i>Design and Construction (Proposed)</i> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| NATO +5 | FMS | \$25 million | \$105 million | \$100 million | \$205 million | \$300 million | \$615 million |
| | DCS | \$25 million | \$55 million | \$100 million | \$205 million | — | |
| Other Destinations | FMS | \$14 million | \$30 million | \$50 million | \$105 million | \$200 million | \$410 million |
| | DCS | \$14 million | \$30 million | \$50 million | \$105 million | — | |

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