

FinCEN should create a transition period for financial institutions to implement the new beneficial ownership requirements. Lastly, FinCEN should also take steps to establish procedures as needed to administer the revised customer due diligence rule effectively.

Updating and strengthening our AML and beneficial ownership laws will give us a 21st century system to combat these crimes. I guarantee you criminals have long been revising, adjusting and amending their tactics to circumvent our current laws. We must get ahead of them, and stay ahead of them. This bill will enable us to do that.

I urge my colleagues to support the conference report and this important measure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES.

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Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose another massive infusion of arms into the volatile Middle East.

Someone must ask the question: Can a lasting peace be purchased with more weapons? Will selling sophisticated fighter jets and weaponized drones bring more stability to the Middle East? Is it wise to pour fuel on the fire that burns in the Middle East?

The Senate today is debating with these joint resolutions whether to disapprove of the announced sale of 50 F-35s and 18 Reaper Drones to the United Arab Emirates, a country that has recently taken encouraging steps specifically toward Israel, but with an overall record that should give concern.

The primary questions we should be asking ourselves are: To what ends has the UAE deployed its military and its military technology in recent years? Does the UAE have a record that we can trust? What military behavior are we encouraging and rewarding with this sale? Will the U.S. bear responsibility if the UAE misuses these incredibly sophisticated weapons?

The answers to these questions are far from clear. In fact, the UAE's record should give us pause. The UAE is not a democracy. Their human rights record is mixed, and their military activities in the region, as a one-time member of the Saudi coalition, contributed to the bloodshed and devastation in Yemen.

On human rights, let's look at some recent reported examples. In 2017, Ahmed Monsoor, a human rights activist, was given a 10-year prison sentence based on his speech. Specifically, he was charged for posting "false information that harms national unity" on social media. The charges against him were based on a call for the release of another activist who had been put in prison for political speech. Is this the kind of democracy or lack of democracy and lack of speech that should be rewarded with our most sophisticated weaponry?

In 2017, the UAE government also handed down a 10-year sentence to Nasser bin-Ghaith, an economist, for his criticism of the UAE and Egyptian Governments. Is this the kind of country that deserves our most sophisticated weaponry?

In 2018, the UAE arrested Matthew Hedges, a British citizen and doctoral student, and denied him access to legal counsel for 5 months. They sentenced him to life in prison for spying charges based on a confession that was obtained in an undisclosed location. They were ultimately forced to pardon him after international outrage. Is this the kind of country that we can trust with our most sophisticated weaponry?

The fact that the UAE is willing to buy this technology is not in and of itself justification for the sale. This is the time to carefully study the situation in the region and to consider the effects of accelerating the Middle Eastern arms race in the short-term and in the long-term.

This is why our government shouldn't be rushing into approving this sale; yet our government is moving at warp speed to approve this sale. It is as if we intentionally don't want to consider all of these issues.

The most frequently cited argument in favor of this sale is that the UAE has taken encouraging steps in the last few months. They have normalized relations with Israel, facilitated civilian travel, and more. Great. I am all-in for that.

We should be encouraging peaceful relations between countries. I support those efforts. But it is not clear that dropping advanced military technology into the region is, in fact, encouraging peaceful relations, given how these weapons have been used in recent times.

The UAE spent years bombing Yemen as part of a coalition with Saudi Arabia to stop the Houthis. This bombing campaign was undisciplined and sloppy. Civilians, residents, and other non-military targets were often destroyed. The U.N. reports approximately 7,000 civilians killed in Yemen and over 10,000 wounded.

The Saudi-UAE coalition helped create a humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Amid collapsing public services, the largest cholera epidemic on record has affected at least 2 million people—probably more—and killed almost 4,000. A lot of this is to be blamed on the civil war that had been perpetuated by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

At the height of the destruction, a Yemeni child would die of starvation every 10 minutes. More than 50,000 children have been lost to starvation.

I have argued for years that the United States should play no role in worsening the crisis via an arms pipeline to the coalition that perpetuates this war. American technology helped facilitate this crisis and should be a real concern about sending more American bombs and fighter planes into this region.

If they weren't used wisely in the most recent years in the Yemeni war, will they be used differently in the future? Can we trust the people who were part of a bombing campaign of civilians in Yemen to do an act more wisely with weapons in the future?

Let's also not forget that a media investigation found that weapons that we sent to the coalition—U.S. weapons that were sent to the Saudi-UAE coalition—were lost, and, in some cases, handed over to terrorists. That is right. Military equipment from the United States was sent to the UAE, but it wound up in the hands of terrorists. The Saudi-UAE coalition reportedly used U.S. weapons as currency to win the approval of militias inside Yemen.

To be clear, these activities are against the terms of sale. We told them: You can't give away our weapons. You can't use our weapons to purchase the support of Sunni extremists in Yemen. But they did. This should give us cause for concern. This should make us say: Whoa. Let's stop, and let's pause before we send more weapons into this war.

Not only that, but Iranian proxies captured some of these weapons, and, predictably, pointed them back at the Saudi-UAE coalition. Guns, missiles, and vehicles ended up in the hands of terrorists—weapons that we put on the ground in the Middle East.

The same investigation found Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, MRAPs, in the hands of Sunni allies of the UAE and Saudi Arabia. But guess who some of these Sunni allies were. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. We are talking about the remnants of al-Qaida in Yemen were getting weapons that we were giving to the UAE in Saudi Arabia. Does this sound like the kind of behavior we should reward with more weapons?

One of the MRAPs still had the export label on it indicating that it had been sent from Beaumont, TX, to the UAE before ultimately getting illegally transferred to extremists in Yemen. Is this the kind of behavior we should reward with more of our sophisticated technology?

The serial number on another MRAP in the possession of the Iranian-backed Houthis was traced back to the 2014 sale of U.S. MRAPs to the UAE. So the UAE not only was trading our weapons for support among Sunni extremists, including al-Qaida-affiliated extremists in Yemen, but they also were having their equipment taken by the Houthis. So on both sides of the war in Yemen, we had U.S. weapons. Is it a good idea to flood the Middle East with more of our weapons? Is it a good idea to keep sending weapons that wind up in the hands of people who don't have our best interests at heart?

Now, people say: Well, the UAE is doing better. They have stepped back from the coalition. They are not, you know, fighting as vigorously in the UAE. But there still are reports that UAE is still involved in the civil war in Yemen and that they are still engaged.

The UAE has a very conflicted record on human rights. I mentioned a few of those who have been in prison for 10 years to life for speech—for speech against the government or even just speech the government doesn't like. But flogging is also used as a form of punishment. There is no true freedom of speech or press in the UAE. Is this the kind of country we should give our most sophisticated technology to?

Activists have been held in secret detention centers in the UAE. Electric shocks have been used as a form of punishment in the UAE. Social media statements against the government are criminalized. You can be put in prison for text messages, and people have been put in prison and/or deported for text messages.

The government has used mass trials against dissidents. Statements of support for Qatar were made illegal during the region's diplomatic standoff. Criticisms of government officials were made illegal by decree. This is not an open society; this is not a democracy; and this is decidedly not a country that we should be giving our most sophisticated weaponry to.

Do we believe these arms sales will encourage or discourage bad behavior from the UAE? We are clearly communicating to the UAE that human rights take a backseat to arms sales.

Part of the consideration for these arms sales is the recent developments from the UAE—most prominently, the UAE's normalizing relations with Israel through the Abraham accords. It is a positive development, without a doubt. I am all in favor of it. I am all in favor of trading with the UAE. I am all in favor of Israel trading with the UAE. I am all in favor of good diplomatic relations, but you can also have diplomatic relations without flooding the region with our most sophisticated armaments.

Outwardly, we are told by all involved that the F-35s are not a condition for the Abraham accords, but if you ask whether it is a good idea to send some of our most advanced weaponry to the UAE, we are nonetheless told, if we don't, it might jeopardize the accords. Well, which is it? They are either part of the accords or they are not.

I, frankly, think, if the weapons were not to go, that the advantages to Israel-UAE having diplomatic relations in trade are so great that they will continue. The assurance right now is that we will guarantee what is called Israel's qualitative military edge in the region, even after the sale of F-35s and Reaper drones to the UAE. So the message to Israel is: Yes, we are giving the same advanced fighter jets to the UAE, but we will give you even better jets in the future.

All I can say is, that is a big maybe. And people who accept, on the face of that, that, oh, yes, we are going to guarantee something, but we are giving this same equipment to people who have been on the other side of virtually

every other war in the Middle East, I think, is a hopeful promise but not necessarily a guarantee.

The easiest way, if you favor protecting Israel's QME, or military edge, is to stop sending military assets to other countries in the region. We are competing with ourselves right now. We give advanced weaponry to Israel, and then we say we are going to keep your advantage. But then we give the advanced weaponry to the UAE, and so Israel comes back and says we need more. Then we give more to them, and the Saudis want more. And then once we give the weapons to the Saudis, Israel wants more. It is a never-ending arms race between the so-called countries that are actually getting along, not to mention the arms race between those who are opposed to Iran in the region.

The easiest way to protect the qualitative military edge of Israel is to quit sending more advanced weaponry into the region. We have committed to protecting Israel's QME in response to these sales, but we continue to obligate ourselves to increasingly large sales to offset the large sales we have already approved to others, like the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

There is another aspect to the qualitative military edge that is rarely discussed. It is the QME that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms have over Iran. Saudi Arabia is the third biggest purchaser of weapons and the third biggest spender on military of anyone in the world now, but if you add Saudi Arabia's weapons to the Gulf sheikdoms' weaponry, you find that they spend eight times more on their military than Iran. So what kind of response would we imagine?

We may not like what Iran does, but we should at least think about what they will do in response to what we do, and what in response to what the Saudis do and the UAE does and Israel does. Exacerbating the QME inevitably leads to pressure on Iran to further escalate the arms race and becomes a never-ending destructive cycle of more and more weapons.

People say—and this administration has said—we want an agreement with Iran but not just a nuclear agreement. So we got out of the nuclear agreement. We want an agreement on conventional weapons. But how will that work? We asked Iran to limit their weapons, but we keep piling weapons on the other side? Do you think Iran is going to agree to limit their weapons if we keep piling more of our sophisticated weapons into the hands of the Saudis and into the hands of the UAE and others?

There is great concerns with this sale, and rushing it through is a mistake. What happens if the F-35s are shot down? What if Russia or China is able to access our sensitive stealth technology? How will the need for contractors be handled in a secure fashion?

Some supporters of Israel are very worried about this. The Zionist Organi-

zation of America, for example, has opposed the sale because it jeopardizes Israel's qualitative military edge. It makes the technologies on which Israel relies less secure.

This statement from the Zionist Organization of America is quite clear: "The security of both the U.S. and Israel is best served by preventing any other countries from acquiring this advanced aircraft."

They couldn't be clearer. Even many in Israel were initially, and very vocally, opposed to this sale. Their Minister of Defense, Benny Gantz, said absolutely it was a terrible idea. Their Minister of Settlements, same thing.

I would urge my colleagues to consider the possible consequences of this sale. We should not accelerate an arms race in the Middle East; we should not jeopardize the security of our military technologies; and we should not reward a decade-plus of undesirable behavior by the UAE. I urge a vote in support of these resolutions of disapproval.

Madam President, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Foreign Relations Committee from further consideration of S.J. Res. 78, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed military sale to the United Arab Emirates of certain defense articles and services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The motion is pending.

Mr. PAUL. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support these two resolutions of disapproval. I appreciate my distinguished colleague from Kentucky and his support and advocacy here in these particular arms sales to the United Arab Emirates.

Simply put, many aspects of this proposed sale remain conceptual—conceptual. We are being asked to support a significant transfer of advanced U.S. technology without clarity on a number of key details regarding the sale or sufficient answers to critical national security questions.

There are simply too many outstanding questions about the protection of critical U.S. military technology and the broader implications of these sales to U.S. national security regarding the UAE's relationships, for example, with Russia and China as they exist today—as they exist today.

I have heard some of my colleagues say: Well, aren't we concerned that they will go to Russia—they have relationships with Russia and China as it exists today in a military purchase context—and about the long-term implications, of course, to the United States and to our ally, the State of Israel, in terms of national security?

Now, it is disappointing that we are forced to discuss these issues in such a public way through a formal congressional expression of disapproval. That is not normally how we do this. However, the administration left us no

choice because of the way that it attempted to rush through these sales by completely subverting congressional oversight, and, it appears, increasingly, the need for greater interagency review.

Now, the U.S. Congress has a unique legislative responsibility to oversee U.S. arms sales abroad. This process allows Congress to engage privately with relevant national security agencies and the intended recipient countries in order to better understand the intricacies and security implications of any proposed sale. But as it has done before, the administration decided to ignore the congressional responsibilities here and rush through with this sale. They blew right through that period of review that the Congress has had normally for about 40 days.

Let me just say, the United Arab Emirates, from my view, has been an important partner in the fight against terrorism and for other U.S. national security priorities, and I will suspect it will continue to be so after this. It is unfortunate, however, that we find ourselves in this situation.

Following the historic Abraham accords, we started hearing that the administration was planning to grant the UAE a longstanding request—the sale of the most advanced U.S. stealth fighter jets. Both the Emiratis—and I have spoken to their Foreign Minister and to their Ambassador—and the U.S. administration continued to insist, however, that there is no connection—none—between the Abraham accords and this sale. So that is a red herring for those who are concerned that somehow we are going to disrupt the Abraham accords.

While I join just about all of my colleagues in applauding the advancement of diplomatic relations that builds upon years already of Israeli and Emirati engagement, there is absolutely no reason to rush through an arms sale of this magnitude, especially when we are being told there is no connection.

Interagency review of such sales usually takes many months of careful deliberation. The Departments of State, Defense, and others must assess what capabilities are safe to sell, what technology security measures are appropriate and necessary, what restrictions on use are imposed, and how the sale will affect the national security of our friends and allies in the region and elsewhere.

Once these deliberations have concluded, a sale of this magnitude usually sits with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for an informal review process that, by the State Department's own requirement—the State Department's own requirement—would last 40 days.

Then, for reasons the administration has concealed, it completely subverted this review process and officially started a statutory 30-day review—all before any briefings were even given to staff, let alone Senators and members of the committees of jurisdiction.

To date, we have yet to get a clear answer as to why the President and the Secretary of State are trying to, again, circumvent the congressional arms sales oversight process by rushing the sale of 50 of the most advanced fighter jets in the world—technology that gives Israel and the United States a critical military advantage over any adversary.

Moreover, the administration wants to push through without any congressional oversight the second largest ever sale of armed Reaper drones to the UAE and over 14,000 additional aircraft munitions on top of the 60,000 already sold to Abu Dhabi as part of the non-emergency last year. I say “non-emergency” because they declared an emergency, but there was no emergency to be justified.

Delivery of the most advanced features could take years. I say that because, therefore, there is no reason that giving us a timeframe to do what we normally do to determine whether this is the right sale in the national security interests of the United States, not starting an arms race in the Middle East, also dealing with Israel—is that too much to answer when you are not even going to get any of this equipment for years? These are major sales by any measure.

Part of this conversation is also, as my colleague has said, about Israel's qualitative military edge that it currently has over its neighbors and was expected to maintain with its own purchase of 50 F-35s that are still in the process of being built and delivered.

Let me make it clear. I take a backseat to no one when it comes to advancing U.S. policies to protect Israel's national security. I have proven that time and again. But this sale is fundamentally about U.S. national security, about the U.S. qualitative military edge, and about our long-term national security. It is also about not wanting to start and thinking about, at least, what does it mean in terms of an advanced arms race in the region.

Unfortunately, particularly for Members who do not serve on national security committees, there is much we cannot discuss in an open setting, but let me assure all of my colleagues that these sales have very real implications for their own technology security.

On October 9 of this year, Armed Services ranking member Senator REED and I sent a letter to former Secretary of Defense Esper and Secretary of State Pompeo with 16 detailed questions about the F-35 sale. To date, we have not received satisfactory answers to any or all of those questions.

I ask unanimous consent to have that letter printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Hon. MIKE POMPEO,
Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARK ESPER,
Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY POMPEO AND SECRETARY ESPER: We write today to seek clarity on public reporting and mixed messaging from the Administration on a proposed sale of the F-35 aircraft to the United Arab Emirates. As you well know, Congress has statutory authority over foreign arms sales, but it appears that the Administration is trying to rush through a precedent-setting sale of the United States' most advanced fighter aircraft to a country in a volatile region with multiple ongoing conflicts. The Administration appears to be ignoring long-standing, deliberative, internal U.S. processes for considering whether selling such a sophisticated and mission-critical military system abroad could compromise the United States' national security interests—and in this case Israel's—and instead is rushing to meet a political deadline.

There are numerous questions as to how the national security interests of both the U.S. and Israel will be served, or undermined, by such a sale. We fear that the Trump Administration's recklessly accelerated timeline will preclude sufficient and comprehensive consideration of these issues by the national security professionals in the Departments of State and Defense, as well as by the Congress.

Emirati officials have publicly and privately declared that their decision to normalize relations with Israel was not dependent on getting the F-35; however, the Administration's attempt to move at breakneck speed so close to this announcement would give the appearance that it was. Additionally, this sale seems more tied to the American political calendar than to a sober deliberation about regional security.

U.S. national security and the safety of American troops could be seriously compromised by this sale. The F-35 is one of the most advanced aircraft in the world, giving the United States and its allies and partners a tremendous military advantage. This therefore creates an immense counterintelligence threat against this aircraft. Indeed, assessing the risk to our own military advantage is a critical part of the internal deliberations we must make before agreeing to provide this aircraft, including any recipient country's history of use of U.S. origin weapons and its capacity and willingness to protect critical U.S. technology. Indeed, given that the F-35 has been financed, developed, produced, and sold to our security partners as part of an international consortium, the sale has the risk of undermining their security as well.

In light of these concerns, we have listed below a series of vital questions that must be fully answered before this sale is sent to Congress for review, as required by statute.

1) What precisely has the U.S. agreed to in terms of selling the F-35 and other aircraft to the UAE?

How many?

On what timeline for delivery?

Has the U.S. received a formal Letter of Request from the UAE for these aircraft?

2) Would the Emiratis have signed the Abraham Accords if not for the promise of this sale? Were F-35s or any other military sales discussed as part of deliberations related to the Abraham Accords?

3) Has the UAE articulated a military threat necessitating the acquisition of F-35 aircraft?

How would the UAE employ F-35s against that threat?

Are there other military or other means that could also counter this threat or threats?

4) It has been reported that the U.S. and the UAE have agreed to conclude a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) for the aircraft by December 2nd. This is an extremely accelerated schedule for interagency review, consultation with Congress, and preparation of the LOA and negotiation on its terms with the UAE—a process that can take months, if not longer.

Is this deadline correct?

If so, why did the Administration agree to this arbitrary deadline in concluding an LOA?

How would such an accelerated timeline affect the Congressional review and approval process?

5) It has traditionally taken months for a complete and comprehensive interagency review of a proposed sale of this importance and sensitivity.

Has the U.S. interagency reviewed and determined what variant of the aircraft would be best to sell, in terms of protecting the aircraft's technology and in terms of protecting Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME)?

If not, when will that review commence and how long might it take?

6) Has a determination been made that the sale of this aircraft to the UAE will not jeopardize Israel's Qualitative Military Edge?

If so, upon what basis was that determination made?

7) Will any aircraft sold to the UAE be reduced in capabilities compared to comparable U.S. aircraft?

If so, how much less capable will these aircraft be compared to Israeli and U.S. F-35 aircraft and other aircraft?

Exactly which systems, software, and components will be reduced in terms of operational capability in comparison with Israeli and U.S. aircraft, and to what degree and with what effect? Please provide a detailed written and graphic comparison.

8) What anti-tamper measures will be incorporated into the F-35 and other aircraft sold to the UAE to ensure that critical or sensitive military technology and components within such aircraft are not compromised, either in operation or in terms of revealing classified information about such technology and components?

9) Will the UAE be required to enter into binding commitments not to employ such aircraft in situations that might expose them to technological intelligence collection efforts, such as exposure to advanced anti-aircraft radar systems?

10) What secondary security measures will be put in place to protect critical U.S. technology inherent in the F-35?

Will the U.S. require continuous U.S. presence on base to monitor the security of the aircraft?

Will the U.S. be made aware of any proposed third-party nationals to visit the base(s) where the F-35 aircraft are based?

Will the U.S. be able to veto any physical presence of such nationals if, in the opinion of U.S. personnel present in the U.S. Embassy or in Washington, the close physical proximity of such third-party nationals could constitute an intelligence threat to sensitive technology in or of these aircraft?

Will any automatic electronic security measures be employed to protect U.S.-origin aircraft, manuals, and related documents?

Will the maintenance and servicing of these aircraft be performed solely by U.S. personnel, or in concert with Emirati personnel?

11) What measures will be taken to counteract any reduction in Israel's QME?

Will the U.S. shift from a Qualitative Military Edge measurement to a Quantitative one, selling or providing more aircraft and munitions meant to overwhelm the heightened military threat to Israel?

If so, how will these additional arms to Israel be financed? Will the U.S. need to increase Foreign Military Finance levels in order to offset this sale to the UAE?

12) The UAE has taken an active role in supporting Khalifa Haftar, who has continued a brutal military campaign in Libya against the internationally recognized Libyan government. According to recent reports, the UAE may even have violated the U.N. arms embargo on Libya.

What will prevent the UAE from using F-35 aircraft in conflicts where the United States and its allies are pressing for a diplomatic solution?

Will the United States require any commitments from the UAE that it will not employ such aircraft to the detriment of Israel's security interests or the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States, as determined by the Israel and the U.S. respectively?

13) To what extent would this sale stimulate an arms race in the region, both among the Gulf States and with Iran? With the arms embargo against Iran in danger of expiring, would this sale provide greater encouragement to China and Russia to sell Tehran advanced fighter aircraft and advanced air defense systems, in numbers and under more favorable financial terms than would otherwise be the case?

14) In 2017, the UAE and Russia signed an agreement to develop a fifth-generation fighter jet, along with a separate UAE purchase of Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighters. In addition, after being rebuffed in its attempts to purchase armed drones from the United States, the UAE reportedly purchased Chinese surveillance drones and outfitted them with targeting systems. Other reports indicate that expatriates from countries aligned with China operate some of the UAE's weapons systems.

What is the status of the UAE's cooperation with Russia? Would these efforts present security and counterintelligence threats to the F-35?

What assurances and commitments, if any, has the UAE made to the United States to safeguard U.S. technology from Russian and Chinese personnel that may be involved in either of these programs?

Has the UAE agreed to terminate all such cooperation and purchases from Russia and China?

15) What are the Administration's thoughts regarding other sales of the F-35 in the region?

16) Have you, or will you, consult with our partners about these risks and their views of this potential sale to the UAE concluding the sale?

Will you take their concerns into account during the interagency review process to address their concerns?

We look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MENENDEZ,
U.S. Senator.

JACK REED,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I am not opposed to these sales if they make sense and pose no threat to U.S. or Israel security in the short and the long term. But these sales require and deserve careful and deliberate consideration within the interagency process and by this Congress. However, that simply has not happened.

A little while ago, my distinguished colleague from Missouri, Senator BLUNT, asked on the floor: Well, what do you have to do to be a trusted part-

ner? Let me try to answer that question.

Following a classified briefing with the administration—the details of which I will not discuss here—there are a whole host of issues that a trusted partner would ultimately have to agree to.

One, the United Arab Emirates has been building its military relations with Russia and China. Just a few years ago, the Emiratis and Russia signed an agreement to develop a fifth-generation fighter jet and to purchase Russian Sukhois. Our own Department of Defense inspector general recently indicated that they may be funding the malicious Russian Wagner mercenary forces in Libya. So what is the status of and what specific efforts are we taking to address the UAE's current and future military relationship with China—where they are talking about building an airbase outside the UAE's waters, on artificial land—and Russia? There are no answers to that. Do we not deserve, if we are going to send the most sophisticated equipment in the world to the UAE, to make sure that there is a written commitment that they are going to phase out those military engagements?

What specific steps and assurances are the United States taking to safeguard U.S. military technology against sophisticated espionage, and what specific commitments do we have from the Emiratis? There is no answer to that question. A trusted partner would agree to those safeguards.

Three, the UAE last year transferred U.S.-origin weapons to a terrorist organization in Yemen that has a history of targeting civilians. The Emiratis have been repeatedly accused, along with others, of violating the U.N. arms embargo on Libya. Well, what assurances do we have about how and where these new sophisticated weapons would be used? There is no answer. A trusted partner would agree to those limits.

Four, the long-term threat of a highly lethal arms race and the great power competition implication this could set off across the region and implications for future gulf cooperation—the Qataris have already asked for their own F-35s. Is that what is next? Saudi Arabia—well, they may say: We like the United Arab Emirates, but we can't be inferior for our own national security.

What security threats would be posed when the entire region is armed with the most sophisticated weapon we have to offer? There are no satisfactory answers, if any, to these questions.

What guarantees do we have that these weapons will not be used against the United States or Israel's national security in the future? How will that be determined?

What might Israel need in the future to secure its qualitative military edge? There is no clear answer to that.

What specific military threat have the Emiratis articulated that they need the F-35s to address right now? If

they have specific needs, then we need to know that because if these aren't going to come online for some time, maybe their needs are more consequential and they need to be dealt with in a different way.

How might the Iranians react to the increase of stealth fighter aircraft in their neighborhood? We have no analysis of that.

Finally, the timeline. When will the letters of offer and acceptance be concluded? Why was there an initial artificial deadline? Why the rush to cut short the normal, monthslong inter-agency review process by the Congress and national security professionals? Why? Why? Are they trying to lock in the sale before President-Elect Biden is inaugurated, regardless of the possible cost to U.S. and Israeli national security? We have no answer to that.

As I have said before, the United Arab Emirates has been an important partner for critical U.S. interests, including the fight against terrorism and in our efforts in Afghanistan. But according to the United Nations and to the Department of Defense's own inspector general, at the same time, the UAE also seems to be working against our stated interests in other areas. A trusted partner would be in collaboration and in cooperation with us.

Look, I wish we could have had these discussions in more appropriate settings. That is what we normally would have done.

This is, of course, not the first time the administration has subverted Congress's important oversight role in arms sales. Last May, the administration notified more than \$8 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It cited a bogus "immediate" threat from Iran, despite the fact that most of the sales, like these F-35s, would take years—years—to reach their intended recipients.

So, colleagues, at the end of the day, we must assert our congressional prerogative, not for the sake of prerogative in and of itself but to safeguard the U.S. national security interests that we are all collectively and individually entrusted to do.

We must demand answers to the very serious and very reasonable questions many have of this sale. Perhaps with due diligence, we will find that this sale will indeed bolster U.S. national security, but right now, the truth is, we do not have clarity on that most fundamental question.

Colleagues, do you really want a sale of this magnitude to go through without the appropriate vetting measures?

Voting against these resolutions sends a message to the executive branch—I don't care who is sitting there; the present occupant, a future occupant—whoever is sitting in the White House, that we are willing to give up our congressional responsibilities. It is hard to bring that back once you let it go. It says that we will not stop arms sales in the future that have not gone through the appropriate review process.

For that reason, I urge all of our colleagues to support these resolutions of disapproval so that we may have more time to assess for ourselves the nuances of these sales and the repercussions they may have in the region for decades to come, to ensure technology transfer doesn't take place, and to ensure that the national security interests of the United States are preserved. I urge you to support these resolutions to stand up for those propositions. Both are critical to protecting U.S. national security interests.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 77

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all debate time on S.J. Res. 77 and S.J. Res. 78 be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the question occurs on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 77.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 261 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Paul	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Hassan	Reed	

NAYS—50

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sinema
Cornyn	Kelly	Sullivan
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Enzi	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The motion was rejected.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 78

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 78.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 262 Legislative]

YEAS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Jones	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Paul	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—49

Alexander	Ernst	Risch
Barrasso	Fischer	Roberts
Blackburn	Gardner	Romney
Blunt	Graham	Rubio
Boozman	Grassley	Sasse
Braun	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (SC)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Shelby
Cassidy	Inhofe	Sinema
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Portman	

NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, which will be stated by title.