
Arms Control, Arms Transfers, and United Arab Emirates Helicopters

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[The following is a reprint of Mr. Clarke's statement before the Subcommittees on Europe and the Middle East and on Arms Control, International Security, and Science, House Foreign Affairs Committee, in Washington DC, on June 27, 1991.]

I have just returned from a 2-week mission to Paris to plan for five power talks on arms control in the Middle East and to five Gulf nations to consult with them on arms control and post-war security structures. I welcome this opportunity to brief this committee on those issues and to discuss with you the sale of 20 helicopters to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

First, I would like to review the President's arms control proposal for the Middle East. Second and more narrowly, I propose to focus on that element of the initiative that pertains to arms transfers. Third and most specifically, I will address the arms transfer before this committee, the UAE helicopters.

ARMS CONTROL

Arms control is virtually an unknown phenomenon to governments in the region. They have sought security, not transparency. They have sought peace through arms alone and not through limitations. Thus, while we may have ambitious plans for arms control in the region, we know that we are in the beginning of what will be a long process. It is a process that will move in parallel with the political track and can feed back and reinforce political progress.

With President Bush's Colorado Springs Plan, we have started down that long path. Let me quickly review the six parts of that proposal:

First, an arms embargo on Iraq and the elimination of its weapons of mass destruction: I met with leaders of the UN Special Commission charged with that latter task last week in Bahrain and can report that their difficult mission is well underway.

Second, we have proposed a meeting of the five powers who are the largest exporters of arms to establish a system to prevent destabilizing exports of conventional arms, eliminate the transfer of weapons of mass destruction and their components and precursors, bring transparency to the arms transfer process, and bring about responsible arms transfer behavior. France has offered to host those talks beginning on July 8, and all five powers (US, UK, USSR, France, and China) have agreed to attend. I will return to detail this aspect of the President's proposal in a moment.

Third, the President boldly proposed the elimination of all surface-to-surface ballistic missiles in the inventories of states in the region. As a first step, he called for a freeze on production, acquisition, and testing of those missiles.

Fourth, he called for the rapid completion of the treaty to ban chemical weapons (CW) and its early application in the region. To accelerate that process, he announced several new U.S. positions including the unconditional destruction of all of our CW stocks and the renouncement of the right of retaliation upon entry into force of the treaty.

Fifth, the President declared that we would seek to strengthen the treaty banning biological weapons at a special meeting in September.

Sixth, recognizing that progress on CBW (chemical and biological weapons), will be assisted by movement in the nuclear area, the President reiterated our call for full-scope safeguards and NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) adherence in the region. He also added a call for on-site verification to ensure that no country in the area was engaged in enriching fuel to weapons-grade material. In the long term, we seek the Mubarak plan of a region free of all weapons of mass destruction, but we know that can only come when the peace process comes to fruition.

We have been heartened by the support this package has received. The Paris five power meeting will address it further, as will the G-7 summit in London on July 15th. We have had, and will continue to have, talks with regional states on the specifics of the proposal.

ARMS TRANSFERS

As I turn to the details of the second point of the President's plan, let me put forward six propositions that frame our view of arms transfers to the Middle East.

First, we must prevent another Iraq. The Iraqi regime had procured 6,000 main battle tanks. That force was clearly in excess of Iraq's legitimate self-defense requirements and constituted an offensive threat. No international regime existed to note this build-up and address its threatening implications. No agreed standard existed to say that it was wrong. We want to fix that.

Second, arms transfers as a phenomenon are not inherently good or evil. No responsible international security analyst believes that the transfer of the Patriot missile to Israel was inherently evil or unwise. Similarly, no one would think that transferring the Tomahawk cruise missile to Libya would be anything other than criminal lunacy. These extreme examples demonstrate the point that whether to transfer arms per se is not the question, rather the policy choice is what arms go to which recipients.

Third, arms transfers should not be an end in themselves but should be an instrument to other goals. I mentioned the transfer of the Patriot to Israel: that helped keep Israel out of a war. Similarly, the arms transfers associated with the Camp David agreement helped to bring Egypt and Israel into a peace. Among the goals we seek to reinforce or achieve by arms transfers to the Middle East are:

- The deterrence of aggression against friendly states by (A) demonstrating a close military cooperation with the U.S. and (B) providing the capability to make aggression costly;
- The further integration of small militaries such as those of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) to achieve economies of scale, regional cooperation, and credible deterrence;
- The reduction of the likelihood of U.S. forces having to be employed, through increased deterrence by regional forces and the enhanced capability of regional states to deal with small contingencies on their own;

- The ability of U.S. forces to operate jointly with regional states (as Saudi and U.S. F-15s and AWACS [airborne warning and control system] did so well in Desert Storm) in peacetime to deter aggression and in combat to counter aggression;

- The enhancement of U.S. influence among key regional decision-makers through years of experience in dealing with U.S. armed forces and politico-military officials;

- The creation of sufficient confidence in their own defensive capabilities and cooperation with us, that these key regional decision-makers are willing to engage in arms control of increasingly ambitious and effective dimensions.

Fourth, it is not U.S. arms transfers that have been the problem in the Middle East's becoming over armed and falling into wars. Patriots to Israel, AWACS to Saudi Arabia, M-60s to Egypt, F-16s to Bahrain, I-Hawks to the UAE: they have not been the problem.

No Middle East state with which the United States had an ongoing military relationship at the time has been an aggressor. It was not Kuwait that invaded Iraq. It was not Tunisia that attacked Libya.

We have such relations with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. They are not the problem.

I believe the problems of aggression have come from the governments of Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Thus, U.S. arms transfers are not the problem.

Some point to Iran as an example of how U.S. arms transfers can fall into the wrong hands. Iran, however, is an example of how we can effectively ground a force by pulling the plug on spare parts and technicians when a government changes from friend to enemy, as they rarely may.

The U.S. does not transfer arms willy-nilly to any regime that seeks them. It provides them to responsible, friendly, and peace-seeking governments.

We have an excellent record and we do not need new regulations or legislation to prevent U.S. excesses which do not exist in the first place.

Fifth, U.S. arms transfers have helped us to seek responsible goals in the region. The Congress appropriated \$3 billion for arms transfers to Egypt and Israel last year. Why did the Congress do that?

It did it because arms transfers to these two countries helped ensure their own security and, in feeling more secure, give them a real stake in peace.

Arms transfers were a key element in the good relations that the U.S. had with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey before the war. Had we refused arms to those countries we would not have had the influence with them, they would not have had the confidence in us, and they would not have had the high-quality interoperable weapons needed to participate in the coalition against Iraq.

The next time someone asks what good have arms transfers gotten us in our relations with Middle Eastern States, ask them whether they think the courageous stands taken by Presidents Mubarak (of Egypt) and Ozal (of Turkey) and King Fahd (of Saudi Arabia) would have been possible if the U.S. had denied them arms transfers.

Sixth, halting arms transfers to the region while we seek an international system to regulate them is a self-defeating meat-cleaver approach.

What would happen if we did halt arms transfers to the region while we negotiate? Probably the same thing that would have happened if we had ceased to improve and maintain our forces while negotiating START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) and CFE (Conventional Armed forces in Europe). We would diminish our ability to influence the outcomes we seek.

North Korea, Brazil, South Africa, and others will continue to export even if we were to get the other members of the five powers to halt. We will not get the other five powers to halt pending talks or after them.

Moreover, the Administration cannot support any agreement that would prohibit such sales that are necessary for the security of our friends. I cannot imagine that the Congress would either. Therefore, holding up such sales cannot be justified on the grounds of a possible future international agreement that would prevent them. The only thing that holding up such sales will accomplish is the diminution of U.S. influence in a region that this nation thought so critical six months ago that we sent a half million Americans there and fought a war.

HELICOPTERS TO THE UAE

Now let us turn to the case at hand. The Administration began consulting Congress last October about its plans to sell 20 helicopters to the UAE. Now we have formally notified that sale.

The UAE is not now and never will be a threat to the security and stability of the Middle East. Indeed, it is a force for peace. The UAE provided support to the U.S. Navy during Operation Earnest Will in 1987. It did so despite threats of retaliation from Iran.

Before any state (including Kuwait) asked us to act against Iraq's threats of war last summer, the UAE proposed combined U.S.-UAE military action to deter Iraq. USAF aircraft landed in the UAE a week before the invasion of Kuwait.

I went to the UAE immediately after the invasion, and they offered us anything we wanted to prosecute a war against Iraq. They did this before many of our more traditional allies.

In the war, U.S. aircraft bombed Iraq from the UAE. U.S. ships, including aircraft carriers, operated out of UAE ports. The small Emirates air force bombed Iraqi forces. Its small army was part of the joint Arab force that punched into Kuwait City.

The UAE transferred \$4 billion to the U.S. to offset our costs in the war. Even in Washington, \$4 billion is a lot of money.

Is this the kind of nation that we should snub by refusing them 20 helicopters?

Now the UAE is planning with us a closer military relationship. That relationship is part of what I discussed 4 days ago in Abu Dhabi.

My opposite number there asked me, "How will I explain to my people that we should expand our military cooperation with the U.S. and fund some U.S. military activities if you refuse to sell us arms?" I had no answer to that question, nor do I think there is any good answer to explain to such a friendly, courageous country that could never threaten anyone why we will not help it defend itself.

These helicopters will help it to defend its oil platforms in the Gulf. Such platforms were attacked by Iran in 1987. They will permit the UAE to contribute more effectively to the GCC's combined force to deter Iraq. The technology involved is not new to the region. Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia already have bought the same helicopter. Refusing to sell these 20 helicopters to the UAE would be folly indeed.