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# US fast-tracks \$16.5B arms sales to UAE, Jordan, Kuwait amid Iran attacks

Secretary of State Marco Rubio issued emergency waivers to bypass the normal congressional review period for the sales, the administration said, as Iran signaled its ability to open a new front with strikes on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast.



Jared Szuba

Mar 19, 2026





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*People watch from a street as a tall smoke plume billows following an explosion in the Fujairah industrial zone on March 3, 2026. — Fadel SENNA / AFP via Getty Images*

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration announced plans to sell more than \$16.5 billion worth of radar systems, air defense equipment, and fighter aircraft weaponry to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Jordan Thursday, as Iranian missiles and drones continued to hit sensitive infrastructure across the [Gulf region](#).

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio issued an emergency waiver to bypass the mandatory congressional review period for the sales, the Pentagon said in its press release.

For the UAE, the State Department approved \$2.1 billion worth of 10 FS-LIDS counter-drone interception systems, along with 240 Coyote backpack-carried drone interceptor systems, along with related sensors and munitions.

Another planned sale to the UAE includes a THAAD long-range discrimination radar, as well as Sentinel A-4 uplinkers and THAAD tactical operations and launch and control



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accompanying electronic equipment. Jordan, meanwhile, is slated to receive \$70.5 million worth of maintenance, logistics, and munitions support for its F-16s, C-130s and F-5 aircraft.

The planned sales come as Iran has targeted sensitive early warning and missile defense radar sensors in several US-aligned countries in the Gulf. Iran has also repeatedly struck civilian centers and, increasingly over the last 48 hours, oil and gas infrastructure with drones and missiles.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Thursday praised [Gulf states](#) for their support for Washington's war effort, saying Iran's "reckless" pattern of counterattacks has brought some of those countries "squarely into our orbit." He specifically named the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Speaking alongside Hegseth at the Pentagon, the US' top-ranking general, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine, said the US military will continue to work with Gulf states "to help them to improve any defensive capabilities that they need."

The expedited arms sales approvals came as the Trump administration is preparing to ask Congress for a massive \$200 billion supplemental funding package, the Washington Post first reported and a US official confirmed to Al-Monitor, as the Pentagon seeks replenish its own stockpiles of precision munitions expended during the war.



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from Jordan and several Gulf Cooperation Council countries met with leaders of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Wednesday to discuss “strengthening coordination” in facing Iran’s threats, the Saudi Embassy in Washington said.

Saudi Arabia’s Defense Ministry reported its forces intercepted eight ballistic missiles approaching Riyadh late Wednesday.

On Thursday, the ministry said at least one drone hit the key Saudi Aramco-ExxonMobil ([SAMREF](#)) Refinery on the kingdom’s west coast along the Red Sea. It also said Saudi forces intercepted a ballistic missile targeting Port Yanbu, the kingdom’s main oil and gas export terminal on the Red Sea.

Saudi Arabia has shifted most of its seaborne exports of oil and gas to its Red Sea coast in order to bypass Iran’s ongoing missile attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. The strikes by Iran Thursday came after Israeli warplanes hit Iran’s Pars natural gas field on Thursday in a new escalation. The Iranian barrages – which followed damaging strikes on the region’s largest natural gas plant and export hub in Qatar on Thursday – appeared to signal a warning by Tehran that its forces may begin targeting Saudi Arabia’s alternative Red Sea export routes as well.

Doing so would almost certainly compound the pressure Iran is imposing on the global economy, especially if Yemen’s Houthi rebels begin firing at commercial shipping in the Bab al-Mandeb.



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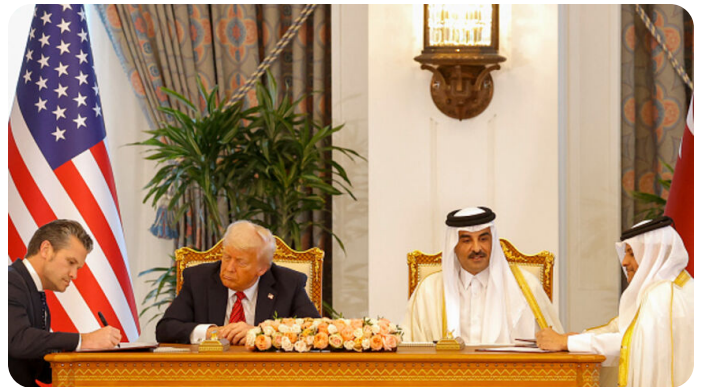


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