

An Inconvenient Truth: How The Obama Administration Became Earth's Largest Arms Dealer

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Global Research, June 15, 2016

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With the Obama presidency in its final year, there is one central element of his foreign policy that has received little attention – the dramatic acceleration of lethal weapons exports by the U.S. military and defense contractors.

The Obama administration has approved more lethal weapon sales to more foreign countries than any U.S. administration since World War II. [Many billions more](#) than G.W. Bush's administration, in fact. And some of these sales will likely result in unintended consequences i.e. "[blowback](#)" – especially as more than 60 percent of them have gone to the Middle East and Persian Gulf.

(After all, U.S. weapons [supplied to the mujaheddin in Afghanistan](#) to fight the Soviets were then used to help launch Al-Qaeda. Arms supplied to Iraqi security forces and Syrian rebels [have been captured by ISIS](#). And "allies" from Bahrain to Egypt to Saudi Arabia have used U.S.-supplied weapons to [defeat homegrown democracy movements](#).)

On May 23rd, President Obama [announced at a press conference in Hanoi](#) that the U.S. would be lifting its decades-long embargo on sales of lethal weapons to Vietnam. Such a reversal in U.S. foreign policy raises questions: How does the U.S. arms export market actually work? Which companies in the military-industrial complex profit from these sales? Who really ends up with U.S. weapons? And most importantly, how many of those weapons could eventually be used against us?

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