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Washington, November 19 (RHC)-- Three U.S. senators have said they would introduce legislation seeking to halt the Trump administration's effort to sell more than \$23 billion of drones and other weapons systems to the United Arab Emirates, a showdown with the president two months before he is due to

leave office.

Democratic Senators Bob Menendez and Chris Murphy and Republican Senator Rand Paul announced they would introduce four separate resolutions of disapproval of President Donald Trump's plan to sell billions of dollars' worth of Reaper drones and other munitions, F-35 fighter aircraft and air-to-air missiles to the UAE.

The lawmakers said the Trump administration, seeking to rush the sale of the sophisticated weaponry, circumvented the normal congressional review process. They said the U.S. State and Defense Departments also refused to respond to inquiries about how the administration would deal with national security risks associated with the proposed sales.

Murphy was also concerned with the UAE's "behaviour" in the region, according to a joint statement he and Menendez released on Wednesday. "The Emiratis are an important security partner, but their recent behavior indicates that these weapons may be used in violation of U.S. and international law. The UAE has violated past arms sales agreements, resulting in U.S. arms ending up in the arms of dangerous militia groups, and they have failed to comply with international law in Libya and Yemen," Murphy said in the statement.

The U.S. and the UAE aim to have a letter of agreement for the F-35 jets in time for UAE National Day, celebrated on December 2. The deal also includes more than 14,000 deadly bombs and munitions and the second-largest sale of U.S. drones to a single country, the senators said.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations and House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committees have the power to review and block weapons sales under an informal review process. "A sale this large and this consequential should not happen in the waning days of a lame-duck presidency, and Congress must take steps to stop this dangerous transfer of weapons," said Murphy, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

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