



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on October 27, 2023

DeSantis Says He's Sending Weapons and Ammo to Israel

As the conflict between Israel and Hamas plays out in the Middle East, Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis is assuming a global involvement atypical of state governments.

On Thursday, DeSantis said he had arranged for his state to send drones, ammunition, and weapons to Israel.

As the [Associated Press](#) reported, gubernatorial spokesman Jeremy Redfern said the Sunshine State sent cargo planes stocked with body armor, helmets, and medical supplies. Redfern added that the state worked with third-party groups to put together and send a privately funded and unspecified number of weapons and ammo.



AP Images
Ron DeSantis

DeSantis' office said its shipment of supplies came at the request of Israel's consul general in Miami. While Maor Elbaz-Starinsky first said on Thursday that he had not requested the weapons nor spoken with the governor about receiving these through private parties, he later clarified that other individuals in Israel's government had been in touch with DeSantis' office to make the determination of which supplies would be sent.

DeSantis has used his position as governor to have influence on national issues on a number of occasions. For example, earlier this week he ordered public universities in the state to close down chapters of a pro-Palestinian student group that detractors say supports Hamas and stokes antisemitism. And since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Florida has run flights for approximately 700 Americans to evacuate from there.

As AP notes, there are political points to be gained for DeSantis and other Republican politicians who take a pro-Israel stance at this time:

The confirmation of the military aid comes as DeSantis and other GOP presidential contenders are expected to attend the Republican Jewish Coalition's annual gathering of donors, which kicks off Friday in Las Vegas. DeSantis is scheduled to speak Saturday morning to a Nevada Republican group at a casino-resort on the Las Vegas Strip.

DeSantis and the other candidates have largely lined up behind Israel and accused President Joe Biden of not doing enough to support the Israelis. DeSantis has swiped at former President Donald Trump, the heavy front-runner in the 2024 primary, and former South Carolina governor and United Nations ambassador Nikki Haley over Israel as well.

It isn't known whether DeSantis communicated with the White House about weapons shipments to Israel. The Commerce Department is tasked with regulating the shipment of various classes of weaponry and technology.



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Nevertheless, John Kirby, a spokesman for the White House’s National Security Council, noted that it “is not illegal for the governor of a state to offer a measure of foreign assistance to another country.”

He added, “There are laws and regulations which govern how the export process is handled and that’s all done through Commerce. I couldn’t speak with authority today about whether the governor has checked all those boxes or not.”

And Thomas Krueger, a foreign-policy advisor specializing in international trade at the Akin Gump law firm and who was previously director of strategic trade at the National Security Council, told AP that it all comes down to which specific items are being exported; some military equipment would need a license, while some would require authorization from either the State or Commerce Departments.

With tensions high amid the fighting and the deaths of civilians on both sides in the Israel-Palestine conflict, some voices in the Washington foreign policy establishment are using the situation as an opportunity to push the United States into war with Iran.

Over the past week, drone and rocket strikes have targeted American troops at least 10 times in Iraq and three times in Syria. The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) told NBC News on October 24 that the October 18 drone strike on the Al-Tanf outpost in Syria led to 20 troops sustaining “minor injuries.”

Several formerly unknown militias have claimed to be responsible for the strikes. While the United States has blasted Iran and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for “supporting” the militants, it has not supplied any proof of Iranian responsibility.

The New American’s Joe Wolverton wrote an [analysis](#) titled “Tracking the Source of Weapons Used in the Attack on Israel,” in which he examined claims that Iran and the Biden administration are responsible.

According to Wolverton:

Hamas’ avenues for acquiring weaponry are multifaceted and perpetually adaptable, ranging from maritime smuggling operations and clandestine partnerships with nations such as Iran and Syria — perhaps facilitated by the current presidential administration — to the shadowy realms of the black market. The question of where Hamas gets its weapons cannot be answered simply or surely.... Rocket weaponry continues to be a significant part of Hamas’ arsenal. As the situation maintains its tense and dynamic nature, comprehending these procurement methods becomes increasingly imperative, particularly if any of the funds used were made available by the government of the United States.

What is clear is that there is now, and for years has been, a concerted push within the military establishment to go to war with Iran (remember John McCain singing “bomb bomb bomb, bomb bomb Iran”?).

The question is whether the American people will allow themselves to be so readily led into another Iraq-style war on questionable pretenses.



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