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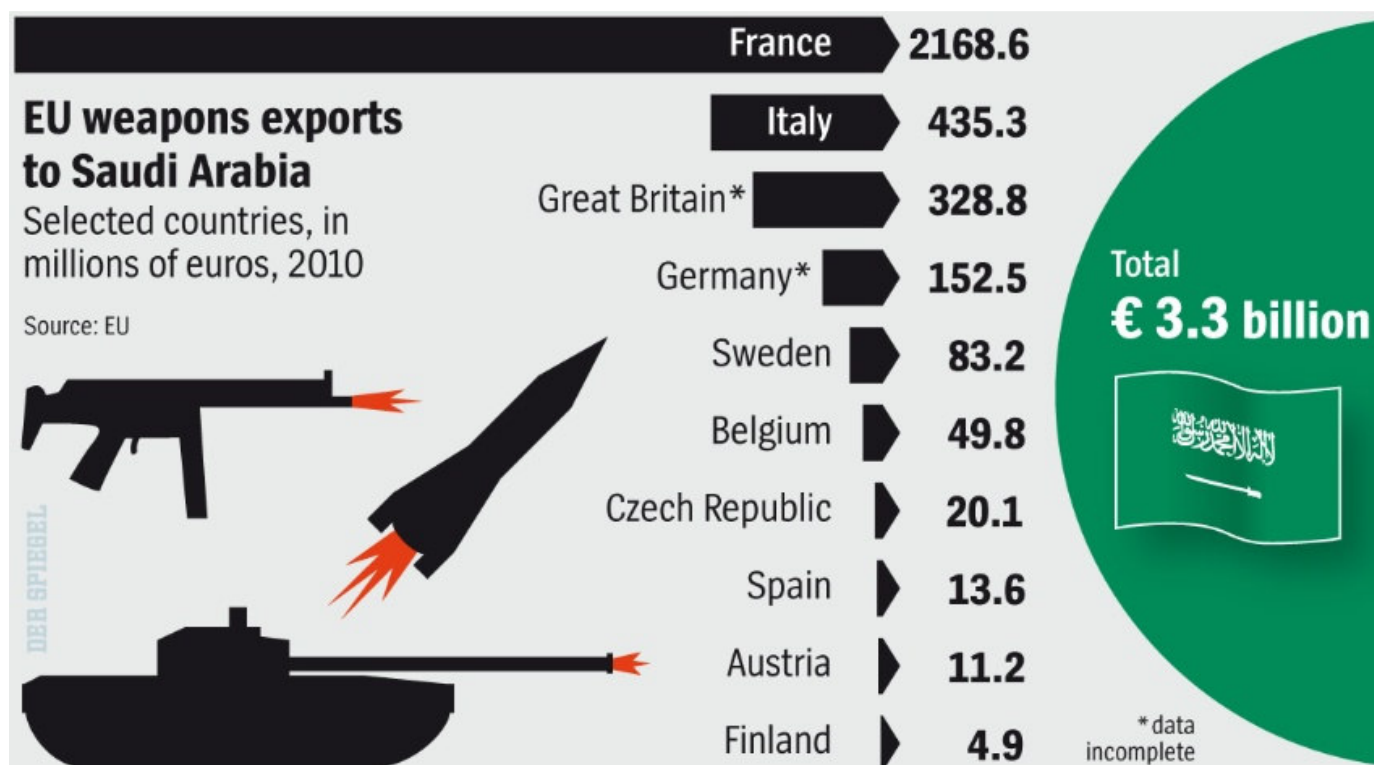
Massive EU Weapons Sales to Saudi Arabia Contribute to Fuelling International Aggression and Terrorism in the Middle East

by Julie Lévesque
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According to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, the European Union is the most important weapons exporter to Saudi Arabia. Of all EU member states, France comes first with Euro2168.6

million of exports in 2010. Italy is in second place with Euro435.3 million, before Great Britain, with Euro328.8 million.



Source: Der Spiegel

By arming the Saudi kingdom, the member states of the European Union are breaking prevailing EU rules regulating the exports of weapons, notes *Der Spiegel*. The magazine quotes the relevant section of the legislation on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament titled [Security-related export controls II - Military equipment](#), which states:

[...] Member States have once again shown their determination to **prevent the export of military technology and equipment which might be used for undesirable purposes such as internal repression or international aggression or contribute to regional instability.**

It is worth noting, in this regard, that a large quantity of the weapons sold to Saudi Arabia by EU member states has [ended up in the hands of Libyan and Syrian “rebels” including terrorists](#), thus largely contributing to fuelling international aggression and regional instability. According to Finian Cunningham: "Saudi Arabia and Qatar in particular were also

instrumental in driving events in Syria and Libya, providing [financial support, weapons, covert fighters and strident diplomatic backing](#) for the self-styled “transitional councils”.

Der Spiegel confirms that Saudi Arabia participated in the violent repression of popular revolts in Bahrain, an issue which was largely ignored by the Western mainstream media.

While the European Union member states, especially France, have expressed their "concern for human rights" in Syria and Libya, they have turned a blind eye to Saudi Arabia's contempt for those same human rights. The EU member states are the main weapons providers of the Al Saud Monarchy, one of the World's most repressive regimes, serving the strategic interests of the US and NATO in the Middle East. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has also channeled weapons and financial support to Al Qaeda affiliated brigades in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa.

The German magazine notes that the global weapons trade is booming, and “has increased by 24 percent over the last five years -- despite efforts to curb it.” ([EU Nations Sell the Most Arms to Saudi Arabia](#), *Der Spiegel*, March 19, 2012.)

In a bitter irony, the world's top weapons traders (US, Russia, Britain, France, China) are the countries designated under the UN Charter to "preserve peace", namely as permanent members of the UN Security Council. (See Richard F. Grimmett, *CRS Report for Congress; Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2003-2010* , September 22, 2011.)

In 2010, the “war business” reached 1.6 trillion dollars according to the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#).