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[Inside Story](#) [Witness](#) [Listening Post](#) [People & Power](#) [101 East](#) [The Stream](#) [More](#)

Inside Story

Right to arm Iraq?

As the US pushes through an arms deal, we ask if there are guarantees the weapons will not fall into the wrong hands.

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Feedback



The United States is pushing ahead with a weapons deal with Iraq despite the near breakdown of the coalition government in the country.

The deal, thought to be worth nearly \$11bn, includes advanced fighter jets and tanks.

But the timing raises concerns that it will only strengthen the position of Nouri al-Maliki, the Iraqi prime minister, at the expense of his political rivals, and increase sectarian tensions.

Can Washington trust al-Maliki, and ensure that the weapons will not end up in the wrong hands?

Inside Story, with presenter Hazem Sika, discusses with this week's guests: Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specialising in foreign policy and civil liberties; Rosemary Hollis, a professor and Middle East analyst at City University; Mowaffak Alrubaie, a former Iraqi national security advisor and close aide to Nouri al-Maliki.

"The US would have calculated that they go ahead with this deal in order to consolidate their relationship with the prevailing government in Baghdad and in order to consolidate another military alliance in the region. This has been the practice of the US since the 1970s."

Rosemary Hollis, Middle East analyst, City University