



**The Honorable James E. Risch**  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

April 17th, 2020

Dear Chairman Risch,

As a Spanish Member of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, I write to express my deep concerns regarding the possible sale of ten AGM-84L Harpoon Block II anti-ship missiles to Morocco. If approved, this decision will negatively affect the security interests of Spain, a NATO Member and long-standing ally of the United States, and fundamentally alter the balance of power in the strategically important Strait of Gibraltar.

On April 14th, 2020, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified the US Congress, for its consideration, of the State Department's approval of a possible Foreign Military Sale of the aforementioned equipment to the Government of Morocco. Contrary to the DSCA's assessment, the proposed sale will most certainly alter the basic military balance in the region and increase tensions in a vital maritime choke point.

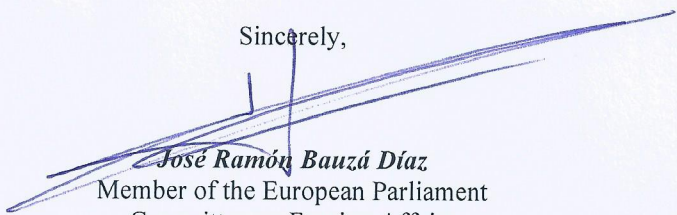
In recent times, Morocco has exploited the political instability in Spain to advance its territorial ambitions over Spanish land and waters. In the midst of the current COVID-19 pandemic, which is so grievously affecting our country, the Moroccan Parliament unilaterally passed two bills claiming sovereignty over Spanish territorial waters in the Canary Islands. Prior to that, Morocco had stepped-up its pressure by restricting trade with the two Spanish port cities of Ceuta and Melilla, which it covets. Rabat has made no secret of its intention to annex Ceuta and Melilla, even by military means, and has frequently tested Spain's readiness to defend them. The most dramatic example being the illegal occupation of *Perejil* Island in 2002, when escalation and open conflict was only averted thanks to American mediation.

Despite historical and current tensions, cooperation on issues from anti-terrorism to migration control remains the norm in Spanish-Moroccan relations. However, the cordiality between our two countries rests on the assurance that Spanish sovereignty is protected by our military superiority, which discourages unilateral action. This gap is closing fast. While years of budgetary constraints have undermined Spanish capabilities, Rabat has dramatically expanded its military expenditure, with a 30% increase only this year. If this trend continues, Spain will have to divert its resources and attention to its own defense, and away from its numerous deployments in NATO and EU missions. Furthermore, Spain is host to two crucial American military bases: Naval Station Rota and Morón Air Base, whose proximity to the Strait of Gibraltar makes it impervious for US strategic interests to avoid potential conflicts in the region.

In other words, Harpoon anti-ship missiles serve no purpose in anti-terrorist operations in North Africa. On the contrary, they are likely to be aimed at Spain, an ally of the United States, in an ever more likely confrontation. Therefore, I strongly urge you to reconsider this sale.

Thank you for your attention, and please accept my heartfelt condolences for the terrible toll that the coronavirus pandemic is taking on the people of the United States.

Sincerely,

  
**José Ramón Bauzá Díaz**  
Member of the European Parliament  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Delegation for relations with the United States of America