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Bush authorizes U.S. arms shipments to Kosovo

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U.S. President George W. Bush authorized Wednesday supplying Kosovo with weapons, a move which was immediately blasted by the Serbian authorities.

In a memo to the State Department made public by the White House, Bush said: "I hereby find that the furnishing of defense articles and defense services to Kosovo will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace."

The move is seen as a preparation for a future NATO-sponsored Kosovo security force, which was proposed by the Martti Ahtisaari plan.

Reacting to Bush's announcement, Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said it represented "another deeply wrong move by the US".

"There are already too many arms in Kosovo, and instead of further arming the Albanians, it would be much better for America to come back to the respect of international law and of the UN Charter. Kosovo does not need new arms, but new talks. Reestablishing international law in the Balkans, and not arms shipments, is the only way which could guarantee peace and stability in the region", Kostunica said.

"This decision by the U.S. president provokes greatest possible worry and can lead to a further deepening of the problems created by the violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and by Washington's authorization to Pristina to illegally proclaim unilateral independence", Serbia's Prime Minister said.