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Russia: West Arming Syrian Rebels

By Jason Ditz

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In comments today to Russian media, Deputy Foreign Minister [Sergey Ryabkov](#) has accused unnamed Western states of secretly sending arms and advising the Syrian rebel factions, warning the move was fueling a crisis.



Ryabkov also condemned NATO and the Arab League for attempting to use the UN Security Council to facilitate a regime change in Syria, saying the council was “not a tool for intervention in internal affairs” and threatening “drastic measures” if the policy continues.

Though there is as of yet no solid proof of any nation arming any rebel factions, the Turkish government has openly backed the Free Syrian Army (FSA), and is providing media access to its leadership through the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

The FSA is made up of defectors from the Syrian military, [led by Col. Riad al-Assad](#). Many of the defectors have made their way out of Syria with weapons taken from barracks, so it is unclear if they even need arms.

Still, while we can't prove that arms are flowing yet, officials have given us reason to believe such aid may be forthcoming. Rep. Steve Chabot (R – OH), [the head of the House subcommittee on the Middle East, is openly calling for armament of the rebels](#).