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Russia: US Arming Syria's Rebels

By Jason Ditz

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During a news conference capping off his visit to Iran, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov blasted US interference in Syria, accusing them of “[providing arms to the Syrian opposition which are being used against the Syrian government.](#)”

Lavrov's comments followed yesterday's shrill condemnation from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who said Russia [was delivering attack helicopters and other weapons to Syria that were “escalating he conflict.”](#)

Lavrov confirmed arms shipments, but insisted that they were only weapons related to Syrian air defense, not arms to be used against the rebels. He went on to point out that such deliveries are fully in keeping with international law, in contrast to the arms shipments to the rebels.

Recent reports have suggested that the [arms to Syria's rebels were coming by way of the Saudi and Qatari governments](#), though the US has been involved in delivering the shipments through Turkey to the rebels.

Air defenses would be more significant to the Syrian regime in the event of a NATO attack, with calls for a “no-fly zone” being bandied about, particularly by France and Britain. NATO's standard no-fly zone would involve destroying all the existing air defense in the country, as they did in Libya.