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US, UK, France helped militants use chemical weapons: Syrian official

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Syria's deputy foreign minister says the United States, Britain and France helped militants fighting against the Damascus government to use chemical weapons.

On Wednesday, Faisal al-Miqdad also called on the West to stop aiding militant groups operating in his country, saying the same groups would soon use chemical weapons against Europe.

"We repeat that the terrorist groups are the ones that used (chemical weapons) with the help of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, and this has to stop," Reuters quoted him as saying.

"This means these chemical weapons will soon be used by the same groups against the people of Europe," he added.

Al-Miqdad also said he had presented UN chemical weapons inspectors with evidence proving that "armed terrorist groups" were behind deadly chemical attacks near Damascus last week.

His remarks came as the West appears to be moving toward taking military action against Damascus over allegations that it has used chemical weapons.

The Syrian government has repeatedly said it was not involved in the poison gas attack near Damascus on August 21, which killed hundreds of people.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki dismissed any foreign military intervention in Syria as a "dead end," which has nothing in it but the destruction of Syria.

"Nothing is obvious on the horizon other than destruction, catastrophe and a civil war that has no winner," Maliki said on Wednesday.

He added that Iraqi troops and politicians are on a "high state of alert" to mitigate any effects the possible war in the neighboring country might have on Iraq.