

U.S., Allies Discussing Military Option in Syria: Russian Foreign Minister

By [Henry Meyer](#)

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Russia dismissed denials by NATO and three alliance members about plans for military intervention in Syria, saying it has information that a no-fly zone and humanitarian corridors are under discussion.

“Our partners in the West are in fact discussing a no-fly zone,” Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters in Moscow today. “There are other ideas being realized, including humanitarian convoys, in the hope they could provoke a response from government forces, border guards.”

Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and some Persian Gulf countries are considering a repeat of the campaign in Libya, Nikolai Patrushev, the head of the Russian Security Council, said Jan. 12. Turkey, a NATO member, may play a key role and is working with the U.S. on a no-fly zone to protect Syrian rebels, he said. The U.K., France and Turkey, denied the same day that military intervention in Syria was an option.

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe in November suggested setting up humanitarian corridors to deliver aid in Syria protected by military forces. Qatar last week said Arab troops should be dispatched to Syria to halt violence after Arab League observers failed to deter a crackdown on protests.

Russia will use its veto-wielding power to prevent the United Nations Security Council from approving any attempted military intervention in Syria, Lavrov said.

‘Their Own Initiative’

“If somebody decides to use force at any cost, I doubt we can stop them, but it will happen at their own initiative and let it be on their conscience,” he said. “They won’t get any mandate from the UN Security Council.”

Russia, which has Soviet-era ties with Syria, argues that UN-sanctioned bombing of Libya by NATO to protect civilians was used to bring about regime change and that western governments are trying to repeat that scenario in Syria.

Lavrov today also rejected U.S. criticism over a Russian arms shipment to Syria, saying it’s not violating international law by supplying weapons to the Middle Eastern country.

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The U.S. has “very grave concern” about arms reaching Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s regime, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, said yesterday after news reports that a Russian shipment of ammunition arrived in Syria via Cyprus.

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