

U.S. Supplying Anti-Aircraft Missiles To Syrian Rebels

Syrian militants have been supplied various air defence systems, including U.S. Stinger

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Syrian militants are armed with portable air defence systems produced in other countries, including the United States, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Gen. Nikolai Makarov told reporters on Wednesday. "The General Staff has information that the militants, who are fighting against Syrian government troops, are armed with the portable air defence systems of various countries, including the Stinger of U.S. production," he underlined.

Commenting on some media reports that the Obama administration gave instructions to pass on a batch of the portable air defence systems to the formations of the unappeasable Syrian opposition, Makarov said, "The US denies this fact, they say that they did not deliver anything to them (Syrian militants). However, we have reliable information that Syrian militants are armed with foreign portable air defence systems, including U.S. air defence systems.

"It is necessary to find out who supplied it to them," the chief of the Russian General Staff said. "For this purpose all types of transport can be used, including civil airlines," he said.

On October 17, a Syrian source stated that the U.S. allegedly decided to pass to Syrian militants a batch of portable air defence systems. "President Barack Obama, who was speaking not quite well at the first round of the debates compared to his rival Mitt Romney, prepared a 'strong' card. He gave instructions to pass the air defence systems to formations of the unappeasable Syrian opposition," he told journalists.

However, the U.S. did not confirm the reliability of this information. Spokesperson of the U.S. State Department Victoria Nuland stated on October 18 that she cannot confirm anything like that.

Under the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the twenty-first century approved in Maastricht in 2003 the organization uses all available instruments for counteracting the proliferation of the air defence systems.

According to the decision taken at the OSCE forum for security cooperation number 3/04 in May 2004 and approved by the OSCE Council of Ministers at the end of the same year, the OSCE states, including the U.S., that it is committed to contribute to the use of efficient and comprehensive mechanisms for the export control of portable air defence systems. In particular, the export supplies of the portable air defence systems only to the governments of other countries or the agents, which are empowered concretely to act on behalf of the

government, are permitted. The violation of the principles of the decision comes under the effect of penalty sanctions, including those related to criminal persecution.

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