

# US Defense Contractors Training Syrian Rebels to Handle Chemical Weapons

The US-funded training supposedly aimed at teaching rebels to secure chemical weapons stockpiles

By [John Glaser](#)

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The US and some of its European allies “are using defense contractors to train Syrian rebels on how to secure chemical weapons stockpiles in Syria,” according to “a senior US official and several senior diplomats,” CNN [reports](#).

The US-funded training is going on inside Syria, as well as in neighboring Turkey and Jordan and “involves how to monitor and secure stockpiles and handle weapons sites and materials,” according to CNN.

Last week, Washington began warning about the possibility that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad might use his chemical weapons stockpiles against the armed rebellion trying to overthrow his regime.



But top Syrian officials vehemently denied this would ever happen, and it appeared obvious that US officials were less concerned with Assad’s unleashing the chemical weapons, and more concerned with the possibility that Islamic jihadists fighting on behalf of the Syrian opposition [might get their hands on them](#).

Islamic extremists [make up the great bulk of Syria's rebel fighters](#), and this is widely acknowledged by official Washington. Indeed, the State Department [recently designated](#) Jabhat al-Nusra, one of the most prominent Syrian rebel factions, as a Global Terrorist organization.

The US decision to hire unaccountable defense contractors to train Syrian rebels to handle stockpiles of chemical weapons seems dangerously irresponsible in the extreme, especially considering [how inept](#) Washington has so far been at making sure only trustworthy, secular rebels - to the extent they exist - receive their aid and the weapons that allies in the Gulf Arab states have been providing.

It also feeds accusations that the Syrian Foreign Ministry [recently made](#) that the US is working to frame the Syrian regime as having used or prepared for chemical warfare.

"The U.S. administration has consistently worked over the past year to launch a campaign of allegations on the possibility that Syria could use chemical weapons during the current crisis," the Syrian Foreign Ministry wrote in letters to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

"What raises concerns about this news circulated by the media is our serious fear that some of the countries backing terrorism and terrorists might provide the armed terrorist groups with chemical weapons and claim that it was the Syrian government that used the weapons," the letters said.

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