

U.S. Evidence of Chemical Weapons Use by Syrian Regime 'Unconvincing'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow is "not convinced" by the information provided by the U.S. about the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons against rebel forces, presidential aide Yury Ushakov said Friday.

U.S. officials presented their Russian counterparts with information on the use of chemical weapons by Bashar Assad's regime in a recent meeting, but Ushakov said the evidence "could hardly be called factual."

Ushakov referred to a similar event ahead of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, when at a UN Security Council meeting then-Secretary of State Collin Powell held a test tube in his hand with a sample allegedly proving the presence of chemical weapons in the country, which eventually turned out not to be the case.

Earlier, the U.S. government said about 150 people had died as a result of using chemical

weapons, including sarin, against rebels by Syrian authorities.

According to U.S. officials, there is no indication that rebels have also used chemical weapons in the course of the two-year civil war in Syria.

Benjamin Rhodes, deputy national security adviser for strategic communication for Barack Obama, said Friday that the U.S. President had decided to provide military aid to Syrian rebels.

The official said Obama will hold consultations with the Congress regarding the aid "in the coming weeks."

According to international observers, over 90,000 people have died in Syria since the uprising began in March 2011, and over 2 million have become refugees.

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