

Thursday, 6 December 2012

Syrias military loading deadly sarin into bombs report



The Syrian military has loaded precursor chemicals for the deadly nerve gas sarin into aerial bombs and is awaiting final orders from President Bashar al-Assad, NBC News reported Wednesday. If confirmed, the move would mark a step further in Syria's progression toward possibly using chemical weapons. U.S. officials told NBC News that the loaded aerial bombs could be dropped onto the Syrian people from dozens of fighter jets. But they stressed that the sarin bombs had not yet been loaded onto planes and that Assad had not yet issued a final order to deploy them. However, if he goes ahead, "there's little the outside world can do to stop it," one official said. The late Iraqi President Saddam Hussein gassed Kurds with sarin in 1988, killing an estimated 5,000 men, women and children.

Neighboring intelligence working with U.S.

CNN reported that the Israeli, Jordanian, Lebanese and Turkish intelligence services were in close contact with their U.S. counterparts to decide on the next steps. The Syrian government, fighting to prevent the capital Damascus from falling to rebel forces, has insisted it would never resort to chemical weapons. But a U.S. official told AFP on Tuesday that Syria had begun mixing chemicals that could be used to make sarin, while CNN reported Damascus could use the gas in a limited artillery attack on advancing rebels. The United States is worried that an increasingly desperate Assad could resort to the use of chemical weapons, or lose control of them, Reuters reported U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as saying on Wednesday. After a meeting of NATO foreign ministers at which the Western military alliance agreed to send Patriot anti-missile batteries to Syria's neighbor, Turkey, Clinton said Washington had made clear to Syria that use of chemical weapons would be a "red line" for the United States. The Syrian regime said chemical weapons will never be used against civilians even if the regime had full ownership of the Syrian people and the country. U.S. President Barack Obama on Monday warned Assad of "consequences" if he uses chemical weapons against his own people, in a new warning as the conflict approaches the 21-month mark with more than 41,000 people killed.