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## U.N. chief against arming Syrian rebels



U.N. leader Ban Ki-moon said Friday that arming either side in the Syria conflict “would not be helpful” after the United States said it would step up military aid to Syrian rebels. Ban told reporters he has been “consistently clear that providing arms to either side would not address this current situation. There is no such military solution.”

In a related story, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Friday that Canada agreed with the United States’ assessment that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons, calling it a “very dangerous” development. “We share the view of our allies, based on the evidence that they have of the use of chemical weapons in Syria by the regime,” Harper told journalists in Paris after talks with French President Francois Hollande. He called the use of chemical weapons “a very dangerous development, not only for Syria but for the entire region” and said he was looking forward to discussing the issue with other leaders at next week’s G8 summit in Northern Ireland. U.S. President Barack Obama’s administration said Thursday it had conducted a review of intelligence reports and concluded that Syrian regime forces had used banned arms, including sarin nerve gas, in attacks that killed up to 150 people. “The White House confirmed what France already knew -- the presence of chemical weapons and their use, even if we don’t know to what extent,” Hollande said at a joint press conference with Harper. “This revelation confirms that we must put pressure on Bashar al-Assad” including “pressure on the military front,” Hollande said.