

Russia Opposes NATO Missile Deployment on Turkey-Syria Border

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia opposes the possible deployment by NATO of Patriot missiles near Turkey's border with Syria, the Foreign Ministry said Thursday.

"This would not foster stability in the region," ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said of Turkey's request that the Western military alliance deploy the missiles.

On Wednesday, NATO ambassadors met to consider Turkey's request, which followed weeks of talks between Ankara and NATO allies about how to shore up security on its 900-kilometer border to avoid a spillover from the Syrian civil war.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said in Paris on Thursday that France backed Turkey's request.

"There is no reason to object. It is purely defensive," he told BFM TV.

Turkey has repeatedly scrambled fighter jets along the frontier and responded in kind to stray shells flying into its territory during the conflict in Syria, where an estimated 38,000 people have been killed since an uprising against President Bashar Assad's government began in March 2011.

"The militarization of the Syrian-Turkish border is an alarming signal," Lukashevich said at a weekly briefing. "Our advice to our Turkish colleagues consists of something else entirely: to use Turkey's potential influence on the Syrian opposition to seek the start of an inter-Syrian dialogue as swiftly as possible and not to flex their muscles and move the situation in such a dangerous direction."

Russia has vetoed three UN Security Council resolutions aimed at putting pressure on Assad and accuses the West of encouraging militants fighting his government.

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