

# Fears of proxy war in Syria

Russia's pledge to supply one of its most advanced anti-aircraft missile systems to the Syrian government, and the EU decision to end its arms embargo on the rebels, raises the prospect of an escalating proxy war in the region



**TURKEY:** Aided by CIA, Arab governments and Turkey have mounted secret airlift of weapons to rebels. Flights now average one every two days

**NATO Patriot missile batteries:** 6

Lifting of EU arms embargo clears way for UK and France to arm rebels



**LEBANON:** Up to 7,000 Hezbollah fighters\* have joined Syrian loyalist forces to attack Qusair

**ISRAEL:** Threatening to attack any S-300 sites to stop missiles reaching Hezbollah in Lebanon

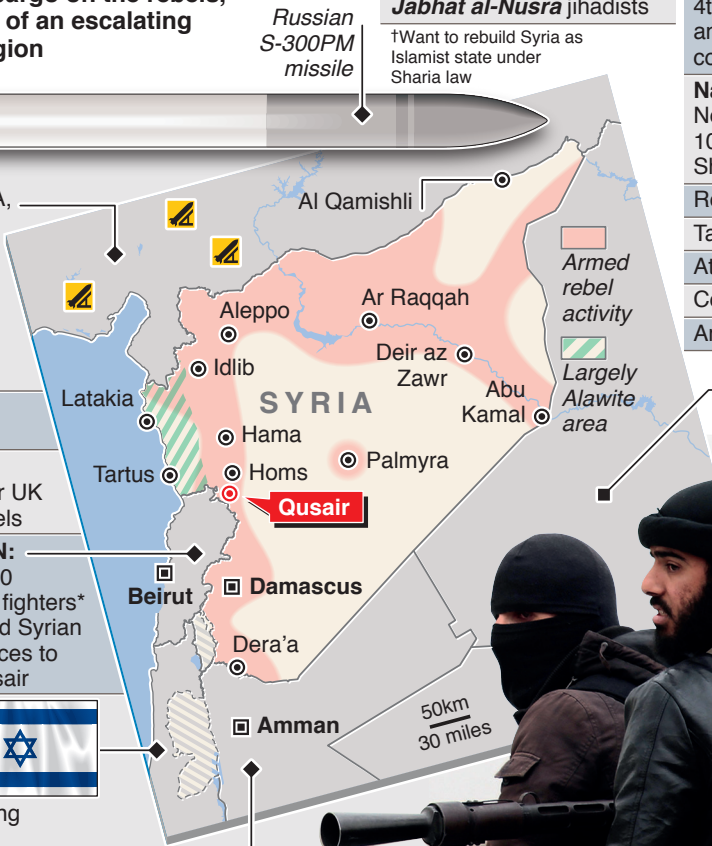


**JORDAN:** UK special forces and MI6 officers allegedly training Free Syrian Army fighters



Sources: NATO, IISS, Wire agencies

U.S.-led military exercise with 15,000 troops from 18 countries. U.S. forces will remain in Jordan after exercise



## BELLIGERENTS

### REBEL GROUPS

Over 120,000 fighters, including some 13,000 Islamist† and 6,000 **Jabhat al-Nusra** jihadists

†Want to rebuild Syria as Islamist state under Sharia law

### GOVERNMENT FORCES

**Armed forces:** 295,000 – including 220,000 army. Around 50,000 – 3rd and 4th divisions, special forces and Republican Guard – considered loyal

**National Defence Forces:** Newly formed – around 10,000 pro-Assad Shabbiha militias

Reserves **314,000**

Tanks **4,950**

Attack helicopters† **70**

Combat aircraft† **300-450**

Anti-aircraft missiles **8,000**

**IRAQ:** U.S. claims that Baghdad is allowing Iran to use its airspace and territory to fly and truck weapons to Assad's regime



*West concerned that weapons supplied to rebels may fall into hands of Islamic extremist groups*