

Al-Qaeda Fighters In East-Aleppo Encircled and Besieged... Western Media Propaganda Goes Wild

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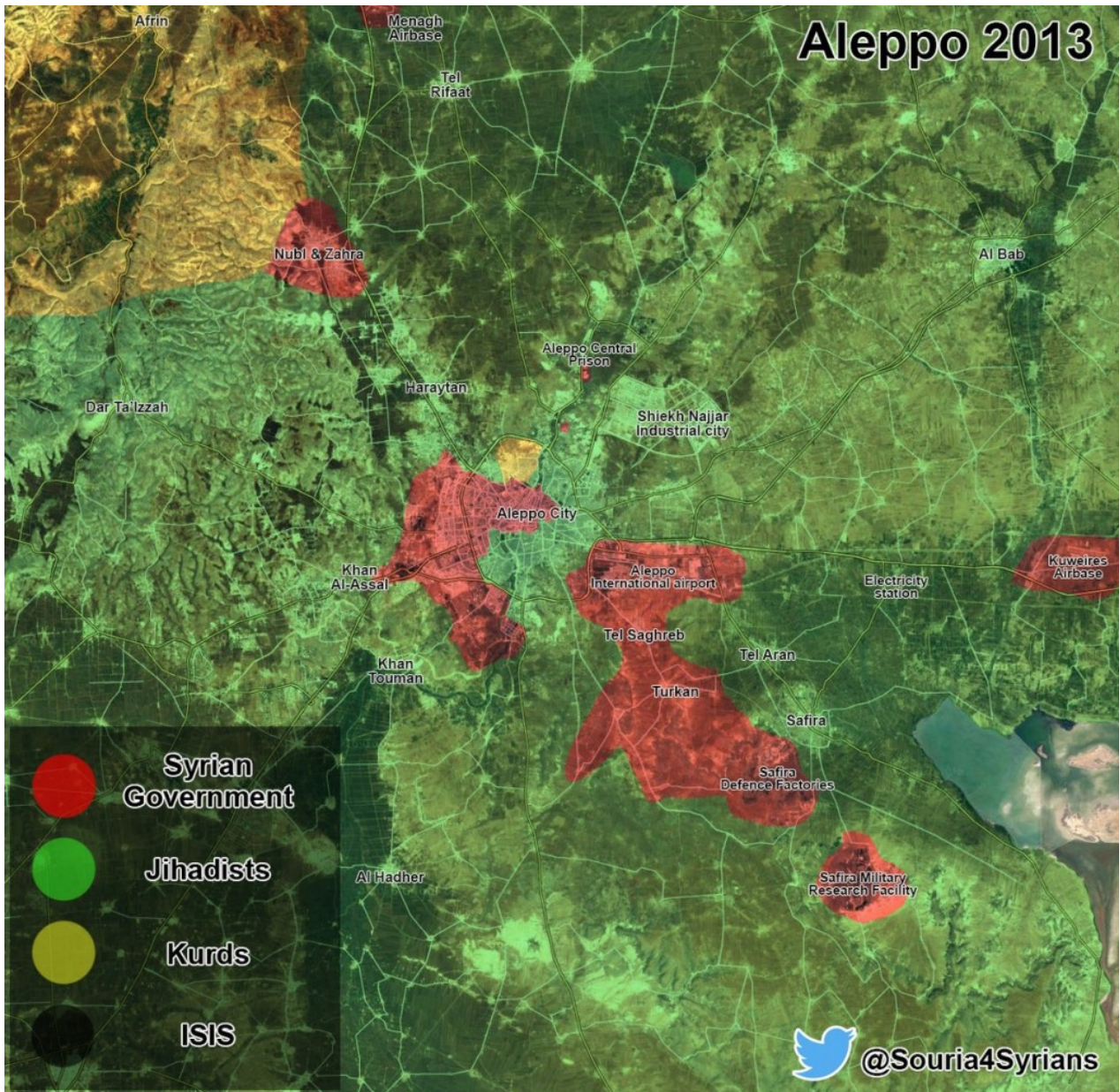
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The pro-jihadist “west” is doing its best to define the number of civilians in east-Aleppo up and the number of al-Qaeda fighters in the city down. If the current numbering trend continues there will be a no al-Qaeda fighters left in east-Aleppo even as none have left. They will be redefined into “moderate rebels” who are entitled to the failed ceasefire they had never accepted in the first place.

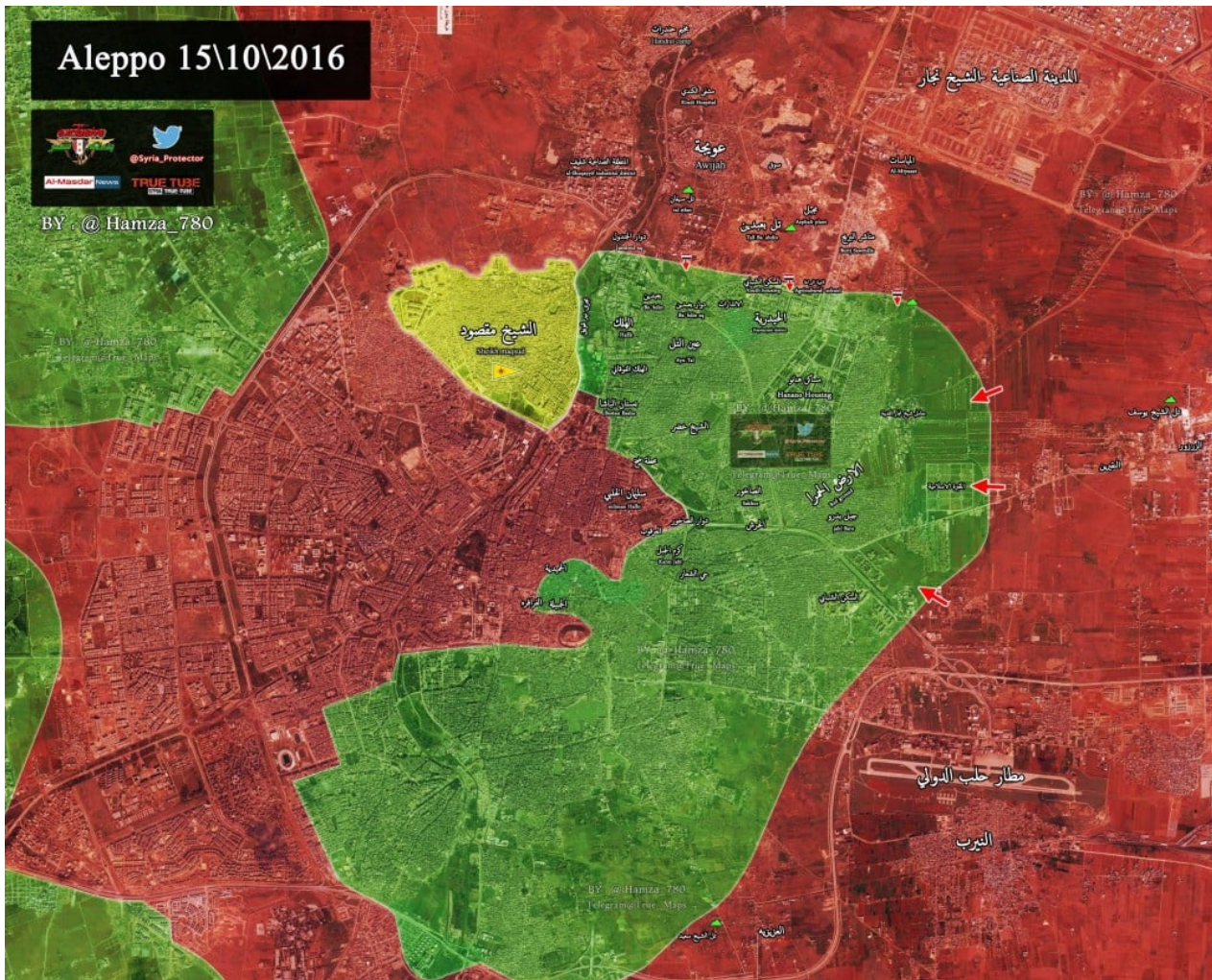
The terrorists in east-Aleppo are encircled and besieged. The Syrian army nibbles away piece after piece of their territorial hold while the Syrian and Russian air force attack any recognized concentrations of forces or material. It is only a question of time until they are completely defeated.

Most of the fighters in the besieged area are associated with al-Qaeda. They are several thousand strong. Only few civilians remain. The eastern parts once housed some 300,000 people. About 10% of those, likely less, are still there. That are the realistic numbers. The spin differs.

When in 2013 the sectarian rebels had enclosed and completely [besieged](#) (map) the government held parts of Aleppo every win of theirs was called a liberation.



They since killed many of the people they “liberated”. Others fled. But the tide has turned. This [animated map](#) shows the development from September 2015 to 2016. The now besieged “rebel” held areas in east-Aleppo are shrinking every day. This is today’s situation. Much of the northern parts of the besieged area, including the Palestinian camp Handarat, are back in government hands.



Sooner or later the Syrian army will try to split the “rebel” held part along the east-west road from the airport to the inner (old) city.

The number game is played in front of the United Nations and in the “western media”. The first marks from an October 5 post [here](#):

“It is primarily al-Qaeda that holds Aleppo,” [said](#) (vid) the spokesperson of the U.S. led ‘Operation Inherent Resolve’, Colonel Warren. That was back in April and al-Qaeda (aka Jabat al-Nusra) has since strengthen its capacities in the city. The French Syria (military intelligence) expert Fabrice Balanche [tells](#) Le Figaro (translated from French):

[Al-Qaeda’s] grip on Aleppo’s east has only increased since the spring of 2016, when it sent 700 reinforcement fighters while moderate brigades fighters began to leave the area before the final exit was closed. The provisional opening of a breach of the siege of Aleppo in August 2016 (Battle of Ramousseh) has further increased its prestige and influence on the rebels.

The UN Special Envoy for Syria De Mistura [told](#) (vid, 27:43) the UN Security Council:

We have seen information from other sources that tell us more than half of the fighters present in eastern Aleppo are al-Nusra. We have also seen reports alleging the intentional placement of firing positions close to social infrastructure, inside and aside

civilian quarters.

A few days after that speech De Mistura held a press conference in which he offered to escort al-Qaeda fighters out of the besieged area. He also sharply revised the number of al-Qaeda fighters down to less than 10% of all fighters. From his [October 6 press conference](#):

We have done a much more updated analysis of the al-Nusra reality in eastern Aleppo. I know I was quoted, and is correct, I did refer to a figure which was close to 50%, you must have heard it, I think it was in the context of the Security Council. Well based on a more accurate estimates, which are also more up to date, and which are never completely perfect but are in my opinion, quite reliable, we are talking now about a presence in eastern Aleppo of at maximum 900 people, 900 people. The previous figure probably was also based on the out of date figure, that about 1500 al-Nusra fighters had left Idlib and other locations in order to join the al-Ramouseh battle which you remember took place some time ago when they attempted to re-take al-Ramouseh road. But they, according to our information, did withdraw, once this counter-offensive did not succeed and failed. So this amends, and please take it now as the line, which can always be amended by facts and figures, and more effective analysis, but that amends the so-called 50% thing. 900 al-Nusra fighters in eastern Aleppo. The total number is, the question is of the fighters in general, including the so-called main stream fighters or the AOGs in eastern Aleppo, the maximum figure that is being considered as such is 8000 people, 8000.

So we went from “it is primarily al-Qaeda that holds Aleppo” to some 10% of all fighters there within a few month without any al-Qaeda fighter leaving. This while the siege was partially breached by the “rebels” in August and additional al-Qaeda fighters reportedly used the opening to entered the city.

One gets the feeling that Samantha Power herself, the “wailing banshee” and U.S. Ambassador to the UN, dictated those “more accurate estimates” to De Mistura.

But even those numbers are still too high some “diplomatic sources” now [tell Reuters](#):

The number of Islamist rebels in eastern Aleppo who are not protected by any ceasefire deal, and can therefore be legitimately targeted, is far smaller than an estimate given by the United Nations, diplomatic sources have told Reuters.

...

Several sources independently told Reuters that de Mistura’s figure for JFS fighters was far too high, and the real number was no more than 200, perhaps below 100. One Western diplomat said it possibly had no more than a “symbolic” presence.

Next week we will be down to one or three “symbolic” al-Qaeda fighters in east-Aleppo. When De Mistura finally escorts them out he will need a few helpers to push the wheelchairs of those few, old and disabled people. That then will have “liberated” east-Aleppo from all Jihadi-fighters and only upright, secular and democratic rebels will remain. They will fall under the ceasefire (the one the U.S. and these “rebels” never accepted or immediately broke). They do not deserve to be targeted by Russia and the Syrian government – no matter what they do. That, at least, is what John Kerry and the “western” media will tell the people. It will of course be complete bullshit and no serious analysts will fall for it. But those

do not get quoted in the media.

While the number of Jihadis and rebels gets defined down the number of civilians in the now besieged area goes up. The eastern besieged parts of the built-up city originally had some 300-400,000 inhabitants while the government held western parts held nearly 2,000,000. That is, at first sight of the above maps, irritating. But if one studies the satellite pictures underlying the maps in detail one will notice that at least half of the now besieged parts are open country and factory areas. The built-up share is much smaller than in the western parts. Current UN estimates for the western parts vary between 1.3 and 1.5 million. That is consistent with Syrian government claims. The UN has several relief missions and offices in the western parts and those estimates seem therefore reliable.

But for the eastern part the UN has given the abstruse estimates of 250,000-275,000. It has not given any sources for that number. It also has no offices and no missions in the eastern part. It is implausible that only very few people left an area that is ruled by various competing Jihadi groups, has had little electricity and water and has been fought over for years. Until very recently passages to west-Aleppo were open to civilians. The rebels only [now blockade them](#).

An independent estimates of the real population in east-Aleppo comes from Martin Chulov, a journalist for *The Guardian* who has visited the area ten times since it was occupied by rebels from out of town. After his last visit he [estimated](#) the actual number of inhabitants to be down to 40,000:

Those who remain in eastern Aleppo, roughly 40,000 from a prewar population ...

Just last week Chulov [reconfirmed](#) his observation:

I returned to the city for the last time. Finding residents in the east was difficult. Those who had stayed this long had no plans to leave. Umm Abdu, a wedding dress seamstress turned nurse was one of them.

...

Umm Abdu has left Aleppo, and few of the others I met along the way have stayed behind.

The Syrian government estimates are consistent with Chulov's observations:

EHSANI2 @EHSANI22

According to well informed senior sources in #Damascus , number of civilians in #Aleppo does not exceed 60k according to their best estimate

[11:02 AM - 14 Oct 2016](#) EHSANI2 @EHSANI22

@MoonofA @TPAtticus @CamilleOtrakji "range" of Syrian government estimate of civilians in E.Aleppo is 40k-60k...60k is high of the range

[11:48 AM - 14 Oct 2016](#)

In other siege areas where the rebels gave up to the Syrian government the numbers of people coming out of them were much smaller than the original inhabitants. The numbers were also smaller than all prior estimates. Daraya, near Damascus, originally had some 80,000 inhabitants. The numbers of besieged people in Daraya the UN had given were variously between several ten-thousands and down to [8,000](#). When the evacuation of Daraya started the Syrian army [estimated](#) that 800-1,200 fighters and 4,000 civilians would

come out. In the end the numbers of leaving fighters was some 600-700 and less than 2,000 civilians turned up to leave. The area was searched and all had left.

Based on the Daraya numbers and those of other sieges in Syria there are probably no more than 4-5,000 fighters and some 3-5 civilians per fighter, i.e. their immediate families, in east-Aleppo. The real total could easily be as low as 20,000.

But even then the al-Qaeda fighters will be still be the majority of the “rebels” in the city. It is implausible that their total number is now less than the number which were earlier announced to enter as reinforcement. The official spinmasters talking to Reuters obviously want the numbers to be very, very low to keep the al-Qaeda fighters unharmed and in place for future operations.

I am confident that neither the Syrian nor the Russian military will be a sucker for such BS. That role is reserved for “western” journalist and the the usual lobbyist-“analysts” who are employed by Qatar, the U.S. and other Jihadi sponsors.

Theo Patnos, who was held hostage by al-Qaeda in Syria for nearly two years, was [interviewed](#) by Vanity Fair (watch the video at that link). Asked what the presidential candidates know about Syria he responds:

They don't know a thing about Syria. Neither do the journalists, by the way. They're doing their best, but they don't know. They're guessing. They speak with great authority but they really know very little. I don't criticize them for being incompetent, but I criticize them for not having the up-close knowledge. They're speaking of a planet they've never visited but they speak as though they do know and it's a little confusing for me.

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