

America Mingles with Al Qaeda in Syria: Washington Wants Russia Not to Target al-Qaeda “Terror Groups”

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The total muddle that is US policy toward Syria continues to astonish. This week we saw the spectacle of a State Department Spokesman telling us that President Obama’s promise to [not put US boots on the ground in Syria](#), was [never a promise not to put boots on the ground in Syria](#). Yes, it was funny to see him squirm, but there is nothing funny about the past five years of disastrous policy in Syria. Particularly considering the thousands killed once the US decided that “Assad must go” and began sending in fighters to make that happen.

Now we see the extraordinary situation where the US government admits that the militia groups Jaish al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham are fighting alongside and are “[intermingled with](#)” al-Qaeda’s Nusra Front, but resoundingly rejects the Russian request to therefore classify these two groups terrorist.

In fact, not only does fighting alongside and “intermingling with” al-Qaeda not get a group classified “terrorist,” the US government is actually asking Russia and the Syrian government to stop shooting at such groups!

Here’s State Department Spokesman **Mark Toner** making the request:



Walid
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US wants Russia & #Syria not to target terror grps AhrarSham & Jaish al-Islam even though they fight alongside Nusra



[Check the video here](#)

So the State Department is urging the Syrians and Russians to stop bombing Aleppo because Jaish al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham are operating there, even though it also admits that the groups are “intermingling” with al-Qaeda’s Nusra Front.

But it gets even more bizarre, as Pentagon Spokesman Col. Steve Warren [said last week](#) in a press briefing that “it’s primarily al-Nusra who holds Aleppo.”

Why does the State Department urge a cessation of hostilities against the forces holding Aleppo while the Pentagon tells us that it is primarily al-Qaeda’s Nusra Front that is in charge of Aleppo?

Do either of them know what’s going on there?

State Department Spokesman John Kirby tries to explain it away by telling us that because Jaish al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham are also present (intermingling with Nusra Front — “because they want to be near one another”), there should be no Russian or Syrian attack on Aleppo.

But in a February 22 [press briefing](#), State Department Spokesman Mark Toner explicitly stated that groups who fight alongside al-Nusra Front or other terrorist groups in Syria would be legitimate military targets!

Asked whether the groups fighting alongside al-Nusra in Syria should be considered military targets, Toner [made it clear that such actions opened them up to being targeted](#):

Again, that's for them to – frankly, to resolve. I mean, if they're going to be – I mean, they cannot – we have been very clear that – we, the ISSG, have been very clear in saying that al-Nusrah and Daesh are not part of any kind of ceasefire or any kind of negotiated cessation of hostilities. So if you hang out with the wrong folks, then you make that decision.

Is this all coming through clearly? Doesn't it feel like they are making it up as they go?

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