

In Syria, within the "Opposition" There are no "Moderate Rebels"

By Tony Cartalucci

Global Research, September 20, 2013

Land Destroyer

Theme: <u>US NATO War Agenda</u> In-depth Report: <u>SYRIA</u>

Latest Western fabrication attempts to portray "moderate rebels" locked in combat with hordes of Al Qaeda militants as ploy to justify further arming of terrorists and even direct intervention along Syria's borders.

Stopped short of direct military intervention by Syrian-Russian geopolitical maneuvering, the West has attempted to retrench their agenda of subverting Syria in a variety of ways. It was reported that the US is now officially arming terrorists inside of Syria after years of semicovertly passing them thousands of tons of weapons at a time and billions in cash directly and indirectly through Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, and Qatar. The goal, in part, is to sabotage any attempted UN incursion into Syria to verify and disarm Syria's chemical weapons, then use the UN's failure as justification for direct military intervention.



Image: (Edlib News Network Enn, via Associated Press) Al Qaeda terrorists in Idlib, Syria. It is now admitted by the New York Times that the entire armed so-called "opposition" is comprised entirely of Al Qaeda, meaning the torrent of cash and weapons sent to the "opposition" by the West and its regional allies, were intentionally sent directly to listed

terrorists guilty of a multitude of unprecedented atrocities.

. . . .

Additionally, a new narrative is taking shape as the Syrian government stands poised to restore order across its war-ravaged nation. The West is claiming that the "moderate" fighters it has been sponsoring since 2011 are locked in combat with Al Qaeda terrorists across the country, even after numerous attempts to claim Al Qaeda was not even present inside of Syria, or present but in insignificant numbers.

In USA Today's article titled, "Kerry: Syrian rebels have not been hijacked by extremists," it was reported that:

Extremist groups make up between 15% and 25% of the rebels fighting Syrian leader Bashar Assad, but moderate forces are growing stronger as a result of support from regional allies, Secretary of State John Kerry told Congress on Wednesday.

"I just don't agree that a majority are al-Qaeda and the bad guys," Kerry said in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "That's not true."

Yet now, the Western media admits they are indeed present in Syria and overwhelming the increasingly "stronger" US-Saudi-armed militants Kerry claimed constituted the vast majority of the so-called "opposition." The Washington Post's article, "Al-Qaeda-linked fighters seize Syrian town of Azaz from more moderate rebels," claims:

Al-Qaeda-linked militants seized a key northern Syrian town from rebels on Wednesday, as mounting friction between anti-government extremists and more moderate, Western-backed opposition factions erupted into all-out conflict.

The Post also reported [emphasis added]:

"There is a huge expansion of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant," said Col. Malik al-Kurdi, a senior commander in the Free Syrian Army, who said the extremists had also recently seized the town of Kafarnaje. With Islamic State well-financed and armed, "the FSA power is in reversal," he said.

But if the so-called "Free Syrian Army" (FSA) is being funded, armed, trained, and otherwise supported with the combined resources of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, NATO-member Turkey, Jordan, Israel, and others, just how exactly is the "Islamic State," and other extremist factions such as Al Qaeda's Syrian franchise, Al Nusra, getting even more cash and weapons?

The answer, as will be explained further in documented detail below, is that there were never, nor are there any "moderates" operating in Syria. The West has intentionally armed and funded Al Qaeda and other sectarian extremists since as early as 2007 in preparation for an engineered sectarian bloodbath serving US-Saudi-Israeli interests. This latest bid to portray the terrorists operating along and within Syria's borders as "divided" along

extremists/moderate lines is a ploy to justify the continued flow of Western cash and arms into Syria to perpetuate the conflict, as well as create conditions along Syria's borders with which Western partners, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey, can justify direct military intervention.

There aren't, nor were there ever "moderates" fighting in Syria.

In an astounding admission, the New York Times confirmed in an April 2013 report that the so-called "Syrian opposition" is entirely run by Al Qaeda <u>and literally states</u>:

Nowhere in rebel-controlled Syria is there a secular fighting force to speak of.

From the beginning, it was clear to geopolitical analysts that the conflict in Syria was not "pro-democracy" protesters rising up, but rather the fruition of a well-documented conspiracy between the US, Israel, and Saudi Arabia to arm and direct sectarian extremists affiliated with Al Qaeda against the Syrian government.

This was documented as early as 2007 – a full 4 years before the 2011 "Arab Spring" would begin – by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh in his New Yorker article titled, ""The Redirection: Is the Administration's new policy benefiting our enemies in the war on terrorism?" which stated specifically (emphasis added):

To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East. In Lebanon, the Administration has coöperated with Saudi Arabia's government, which is Sunni, in clandestine operations that are intended to weaken Hezbollah, the Shiite organization that is backed by Iran. The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.

For over two years the US, UK, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and Turkey have sent billions of dollars and thousands of tons of weapons into Syria <u>along side known-terrorists from Libya</u>, Chechnya, neighboring Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. In the Telegraph's article titled, "<u>US and Europe in 'major airlift of arms to Syrian rebels through Zagreb'</u>," it is reported:

It claimed 3,000 tons of weapons dating back to the former Yugoslavia have been sent in 75 planeloads from Zagreb airport to the rebels, largely via Jordan since November

The story confirmed the origins of ex-Yugoslav weapons seen in growing numbers in rebel hands in online videos, as described last month by The Daily Telegraph and other newspapers, but suggests far bigger quantities than previously suspected.

The shipments were allegedly paid for by Saudi Arabia at the bidding of the United States, with assistance on supplying the weapons organised through Turkey and Jordan, Syria's neighbours. But the report added that as well as from Croatia, weapons came "from several other European countries including Britain", without specifying if they were British-supplied or British-procured arms.

British military advisers however are known to be operating in countries bordering Syria alongside French and Americans, offering training to rebel leaders and former Syrian army officers. The Americans are also believed to be

providing training on securing chemical weapons sites inside Syria.

Additionally, The New York Times in its article, "<u>Arms Airlift to Syria Rebels Expands, With C.I.A. Aid</u>," admits that:

With help from the C.I.A., Arab governments and Turkey have sharply increased their military aid to Syria's opposition fighters in recent months, expanding a secret airlift of arms and equipment for the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad, according to air traffic data, interviews with officials in several countries and the accounts of rebel commanders.

The airlift, which began on a small scale in early 2012 and continued intermittently through last fall, expanded into a steady and much heavier flow late last year, the data shows. It has grown to include more than 160 military cargo flights by Jordanian, Saudi and Qatari military-style cargo planes landing at Esenboga Airport near Ankara, and, to a lesser degree, at other Turkish and Jordanian airports.

The US State Department had also announced it was sending hundreds of millions of dollars more in aid, equipment and even armored vehicles to militants operating in Syria, along with demands of its allies to "match" the funding to reach a goal of over a billion dollars. The NYT would report in their article, "Kerry Says U.S. Will Double Aid to Rebels in Syria," that:

With the pledge of fresh aid, the total amount of nonlethal assistance from the United States to the coalition and civic groups inside the country is \$250 million. During the meeting here, Mr. Kerry urged other nations to step up their assistance, with the objective of providing \$1 billion in international aid.

In recent weeks, the US has admitted that it is now officially arming and equipping terrorists inside of Syria. The Washington Post's article, "<u>U.S. weapons reaching Syrian rebels</u>," reported:

The CIA has begun delivering weapons to rebels in Syria, ending months of delay in lethal aid that had been promised by the Obama administration, according to U.S. officials and Syrian figures. The shipments began streaming into the country over the past two weeks, along with separate deliveries by the State Department of vehicles and other gear — a flow of material that marks a major escalation of the U.S. role in Syria's civil war.

The US State Department has admitted Al Qaeda is the prominent fighting force in Syria.

And as this astronomical torrent of cash, weapons, and equipment was overtly sent by the West into Syria, and continues to this very day, the US State Department since the very beginning of the violence has known that the most prominent fighting group operating inside Syria was Al Qaeda, more specifically, the al Nusra front. The US State Department's official press statement titled, "Terrorist Designations of the al-Nusrah Front as an Alias for al-Qa'ida in Iraq," stated explicitly that:

Since November 2011, al-Nusrah Front has claimed nearly 600 attacks – ranging from more than 40 suicide attacks to small arms and improvised

explosive device operations – in major city centers including Damascus, Aleppo, Hamah, Dara, Homs, Idlib, and Dayr al-Zawr. During these attacks numerous innocent Syrians have been killed.

The State Department admits that from the very beginning, Al Qaeda has been carrying out hundreds of attacks in every major city in Syria. Clearly for those who read the 2007 Hersh piece in the New Yorker, and then witnessed the rise of Al Qaeda in Syria, the explanation is quite simple – the West intentionally and systematically funded and armed Al Qaeda to gain a foothold in Syria, then overthrow the Syrian government in an unprecedented sectarian bloodbath and subsequent humanitarian catastrophe, just as was planned years ago.

If the US & its allies are funding "moderates," who is funding Al Qaeda? (The US).

However, now, according to Western leaders, the public is expected to believe that despite the US, UK, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and Turkey flooding Syria with billion in cash, and thousands of tons of weapons, all sent exclusively to "secular moderates," somehow, Al Qaeda has still managed to gain preeminence amongst the "opposition."

How can this be? If a 7-nation axis is arraying the summation of its resources in the region behind "secular moderates," who then is arraying even more resources behind Al Qaeda? The answer is simple. There never were any "secular moderates," a fact the New York Times has now fully admitted.

In its article titled, "<u>Islamist Rebels Create Dilemma on Syria Policy</u>," the New York Times admits:

Across Syria, rebel-held areas are dotted with Islamic courts staffed by lawyers and clerics, and by fighting brigades led by extremists. Even the Supreme Military Council, the umbrella rebel organization whose formation the West had hoped would sideline radical groups, is stocked with commanders who want to infuse Islamic law into a future Syrian government.

Nowhere in rebel-controlled Syria is there a secular fighting force to speak of.

However, in an explanation that defies reason, the article states [emphasis added]:

The Islamist character of the opposition reflects the main constituency of the rebellion, which has been led since its start by Syria's Sunni Muslim majority, mostly in conservative, marginalized areas. The descent into brutal civil war has hardened sectarian differences, and the failure of more mainstream rebel groups to secure regular arms supplies has allowed Islamists to fill the void and win supporters.

To "secure regular arms supplies" from whom? According to the West, they have been supplying "mainstream rebel groups" with billions in cash, and thousands of tons of weaponry – and now according to the BBC, training as well. Where if not intentionally and directly into the hands of al-Nusra, did all of this cash, these weapons, and training go?

The NYT also admits (emphasis added):

Of most concern to the United States is the Nusra Front, whose leader recently confirmed that the group cooperated with Al Qaeda in Iraq and pledged fealty to Al Qaeda's top leader, Ayman al-Zawahri, Osama bin Laden's longtime

deputy. Nusra has claimed responsibility for a number of suicide bombings and is the group of choice for the foreign jihadis pouring into Syria.

Not only is the Syrian government fighting now openly admitted Al Qaeda terrorists, but terrorists that are not even of Syrian origin.

More outrageous still, is that the New York Times fully admits that the very oil fields the European Union has lifted sanctions on and is now buying oil from in Syria (see BBC's "EU eases Syria oil embargo to help opposition"), are completely controlled by Al Qaeda – meaning the European Union is now intentionally exchanging cash with known international terrorists guilty of horrific atrocities, in exchange for oil. The NYT reports:

Elsewhere, they [al-Nusra] have seized government oil fields, put employees back to work and now profit from the crude they produce.

And:

In the oil-rich provinces of Deir al-Zour and Hasaka, Nusra fighters have seized government oil fields, putting some under the control of tribal militias and running others themselves.

The Times continues by admitting (emphasis added):

Nusra's hand is felt most strongly in Aleppo, where the group has set up camp in a former children's hospital and has worked with other rebel groups to establish a Shariah Commission in the eye hospital next door to govern the city's rebel-held neighborhoods. The commission runs a police force and an Islamic court that hands down sentences that have included lashings, though not amputations or executions as some Shariah courts in other countries have done.

Nusra fighters also control the power plant and distribute flour to keep the city's bakeries running.

This last point, "and distribute flour to keep the city's bakeries running," is of extreme importance, because that "flour" they are "distributing" comes admittedly, directly from the United State of America.

The US feeds Al Qaeda...

In the Washington Post's article, "U.S. feeds Syrians, but secretly," it is claimed that:

In the heart of rebel-held territory in Syria's northern province of Aleppo, a small group of intrepid Westerners is undertaking a mission of great stealth. Living anonymously in a small rural community, they travel daily in unmarked cars, braving airstrikes, shelling and the threat of kidnapping to deliver food and other aid to needy Syrians — all of it paid for by the U.S. government.

The Washington Post then claims that most Syrians credit Al Qaeda's al-Nusra with providing the aid:

"America has done nothing for us. Nothing at all," said Mohammed Fouad Waisi, 50, spitting out the words for emphasis in his small Aleppo grocery store, which adjoins a bakery where he buys bread every day. The bakery is fully supplied with flour paid for by the United States. But Waisi credited Jabhat al-Nusra — a rebel group the United States has designated a terrorist organization because of its ties to al-Qaeda — with providing flour to the region, though he admitted he wasn't sure where it comes from.

Clearly, the puzzle is now complete. Indeed Mr. Mohammed Fouad Waisi was correct, Jabhat al-Nusra, a listed terrorist organization by the US State Department, is supplying the people with flour – flour it receives by the ton directly and intentionally from the United States in direct contradiction to its own anti-terror laws, international laws, and the US State Department's own frequent denials that it is bolstering terrorists inside of Syria.

Clearly the US and its allies are propping up terrorism, and more alarming is that the "aid" they have been providing the Syrian people, appears to have been used as a political weapon by Al Qaeda, allowing them to take, hold, and permanently subjugate territory inside Syria. It should be noted again, that the New York Times itself admits that the ranks of al-Nusra are filled with foreign, not Syrian, fighters.

US narrative aims at "saving" non-existent "moderates" from the Al Qaeda terrorists they themselves are intentionally arming.

Revealed is a conspiracy so insidious, so outrageous, and a web of lies so tangled, that Western governments perhaps count on their populations to disbelieve their tax money is being used to intentionally fund and arm savage terrorism while purposefully fueling a sectarian bloodbath whose death toll is sounded daily by the very people driving it up to astronomical heights. The cards are down – the US has been exposed as openly funding, arming, and supplying Al Qaeda in Syria for over two years and in turn, is directly responsible for the death, atrocities, and humanitarian disasters within and along Syria's borders that have resulted.

While the US attempts to sell military intervention on behalf of Al Qaeda in Syria, <u>using the flimsy</u>, <u>yet familiar pretext of "chemical weapons</u>," it appears that before even one American boot officially touches Syrian soil, an already horrific crime against humanity of historic proportions has been committed by the US and its allies against the Syrian people.

This is a crime against humanity the West intends to fully compound with its new narrative of "moderates" fighting Al Qaeda. The goal is to justify the continued torrent of cash and weapons into Syria to fuel the conflict and perhaps to have "safe zones" imposed across Syria's borders under the guise of "running out" Al Qaeda. Of course, Al Qaeda will continue to be armed and funded by the very interests "running them out" deeper and deeper into Syria.

It is important to understand two undeniable, verified facts. First, there are no moderates in Syria, and second, Al Qaeda's ascendance in Syria is the direct results of the West intentionally arming them, funding them, training them, providing them with tactical, <u>logistical</u>, and strategic support, as well as financing them through the purchase of <u>Al Qaeda-controlled oil fields</u>. Understanding these facts lifts the veil regarding the latest round of lies and fabrications by the West to regain the initiative amidst their premeditated, 2-plus year assault on Syria.

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: **Tony Cartalucci**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca