

Syria Falls to Terrorists Who Are “a Tool of NATO, Israel and Turkey” with US Role Included

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*After combating terrorism and rebel groups for over twelve years, the former Syrian **President Bashar al-Assad** fled the capital of Damascus with his family on December 7, shortly before it fell to the rebels. The victorious insurgents are the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) organization along with an umbrella group called the Syrian National Army.*

Craig Murray (former British ambassador to Uzbekistan), in a [panel](#) about “the end of pluralism in the Middle East”, described the “Syrian rebels” as “a tool of NATO, Israel and Turkey”. This is a complex description for a complex situation indeed. Of the three, many analysts are focusing on the Israeli and Turkish angle—not so much on the American angle, though.

To recap, since the 2011 terrorist attacks, Syria has counted on military aid from its allies Iran and Russia. The [Iranian Revolutionary Guard](#), as well as the (Tehran-backed) Lebanese Hezbollah have in fact been the main anti-terrorist actors in the Levant, by deterring the expansion of terrorist group ISIS (Daesh) and thereby making the region [safer for Christians](#) and [other minorities](#). Islamic Wahhabi/Salafi extremists were, after all, beheading some of them while [kidnapping](#) others and [selling women as slaves](#).

The fact is that the rebels who have won in Syria now are not of a very different persuasion, and it is no wonder many are now concerned. Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens for one has urged the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs to aid the Christian population in Syria. He [wrote](#):

“The advance of extremist armed groups and the capture of Aleppo threaten... the interfaith composition of the region’s population... there is now a looming danger of the complete eradication... of Greek Orthodoxy and Christianity from the wider region.”

Such concerns are well founded. One should bear in mind that (Saudi-born) [Abu Mohammed al-Julani](#), the very leader of Turkish-backed HTS, the group who has captured Aleppo (Syria’s second largest city), joined Al-Qaeda in Iraq in 2003, later establishing its [split branch](#) in Syria, the so-called al-Nusra Front. This group, under al-Julani, [cooperated](#) with the infamous [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#), leader of Al-Qaeda’s split offshoot called “Islamic State in Iraq”, later known as ISIL (ISIS) or Daesh.

Al-Julani’s own later split from al-Qaeda and creation of the aforementioned HTS has been [described](#) as a merely “bid” to “stress his group’s national, as opposed to transnational, ambitions.” In other words, the group is just another re-branded offshoot of ISIS/Al-Qaeda. And those are the people who have now conquered Syria.

One might disapprove of Assad's ruling but such a development can hardly be described by most as anything other than a disaster. Turkey (who aids the rebels) and Israel, as already mentioned, do benefit from this outcome, however, for their own reasons—and much is already being talked about that. But not so many analysts are highlighting the American role in all of it.

For example, the US-backed Syrian Free Army (a coalition which has [taken control of Hom's Palmyra district](#)) [announced](#) that they are “open to friendship with everyone in the region – including Israel. We don't have enemies other than the Assad regime, Hezbollah and Iran. What Israel did against Hezbollah in Lebanon helped us a great deal”–while claiming they are not allied with Turkey. The group, being increasingly dependent on Turkey, is a close ally of the United States, and was even [hosted at the American military base](#) at al-Tanf. Turkey, despite its differences with Washington is of course also, let us not forget it, a NATO member.

The future of Syria and the concerned parties is far from clear now, there being lots of room for infighting among the different rebel factions. Turkey, which has long occupied northern Syria, has taken advantage of the ceasefire in Lebanon to give the rebels the green-light for launching an offensive (with Iran weakened in Syria and [Hezbollah cornered](#) in Lebanon). However Turkish-American differences pertaining to the [Kurdish question](#) are to remain a focal point for tensions.

HTS is indeed Turkish-backed but, as mentioned, its roots can be traced to Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other such groups empowered by Washington's policy. One should not forget the fact that there are still [around 900 US troops in Syria](#) (mostly in the northeast, near Turkish strongholds) which witnessed the rebel victory. This has led some analysts to comment that “[whether the Pentagon wants to admit it or not](#)”, these troops are “likely involved in the broader conflict unfolding there right now.”

Moreover, there is nothing new about the West praising and empowering brutal terrorism and radicals when such is deemed geopolitically convenient: if former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton under President Barack Obama had achieved her stated goals, Syria would be [in a similar situation to Libya since 2011](#) – in Libya, coincidence or not, arms provided by the US to rebels there also “[ended up](#)” in ISIS hands, according to [Amnesty reports](#).

Back to the Levant region, **it is a well-established fact that Washington played a key role in the empowerment of ISIS (or Daesh) both in Syria and Iraq** (as well as other brutal radicals), with the Pentagon and the CIA arming mostly foreign Islamic militias that ended up even [fighting among themselves](#). This is consistent with American foreign policy [elsewhere](#) too. The infamous [Clinton emails](#) also show how the US was aware of their allies Qatar and Saudi Arabia supporting Daesh terror.

The White House National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson Sean Savett [said](#) in a recent statement that Washington “has nothing to do with this offensive.” Considering all of the above, one can certainly be justified in taking such statements with a grain of salt. For Washington, further destabilizing Syria might also serve the role of “countering” Russia in the region. The US has consistently aided, funded, armed and trained Fundamentalist rebels who operate in the Levant for over a decade and there is no reason to assume anything is different now with the newest developments.

Finally, still on the topic of the Christian minority, US foreign policy—for a variety of

reasons—has actually often involved dividing or destabilizing Eastern Christian (both Orthodox and Miaphysitist) populations or sometimes even aiding or turning a blind eye to the ethnic-religious cleansing of such groups or of Christians in general in the Levant region, for that matter.

This is of course quite ironic for a country such as the US who often hails itself as “one nation under God” or as a “Christian nation”– this being the Republican party line at least. Trump for one has [posted](#) that “Syria is a mess, but is not our friend”.

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