

# You Won't Believe What Former US Ambassador Robert S. Ford Said About al-Qaeda's Syrian Allies

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Global Research, February 01, 2016

[Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity](#)

27 January 2016

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*Robert Ford was US Ambassador to Syria when the revolt against Syrian president Assad was launched. He not only was a chief architect of regime change in Syria, but actively worked with rebels to aid their overthrow of the Syrian government.*

*Ford assured us that those taking up arms to overthrow the Syrian government were simply moderates and democrats seeking to change Syria's autocratic system. Anyone pointing out the obviously Islamist extremist nature of the rebellion and the foreign funding and backing for the jihadists was written off as an Assad apologist or worse.*

*Ambassador Ford talked himself blue in the face reassuring us that he was only supporting moderates in Syria. As evidence mounted that the largesse doled out by Washington was going to jihadist groups, Ford finally admitted early last year that most of the moderates he backed were fighting alongside ISIS and al-Qaeda. Witness [this incredible Twitter exchange](#) with then-ex Ambassador Ford:*



Then late last year the McClatchy News Service ran an [article](#) in which Ambassador Ford admitted that his "moderates" regularly collaborated with ISIS and al-Qaeda to the point where he no longer thought the US government should be arming them.

So those who pointed out that the rebellion in Syria was foreign-driven and jihadist from the start were no longer crazy conspiracy theorists, but were rather conspiracy factists.

Did that stop Ford from pushing radicals, though? Hardly!

As the Syria peace talks are scheduled to begin within days in Geneva, with a main sticking point being whether to admit groups that have allied with al-Qaeda to the negotiating table as potential leaders of "new Syria," it is extremely instructive to recall what Ambassador Ford said about one such group, Ahrar al-Sham, to a BBC interviewer last October.

Ahrar al-Sham, according to experts including [those](#) at Stanford University, "was founded by members of Al Qaeda and maintains links to AQ's core leadership." The group vigorously rejects the notion of an elected government in Syria after the overthrow of Assad, instead [calling for](#):

...a Divine system prescribed for his Caliph and slaves... It is the system where

the rule is for the pure Islamic law. Allah's law is complete, and you need only consider the texts and derive rules.

Ahrar al-Sham has been [reported](#) by Christian rights groups in Syria to have executed Christians in Idlib, Syria, after they captured the town last year. The Christians committed the "crime" of not following Sharia law.

Sounds like a pretty bad group, but nevertheless it still has its Western cheerleaders...including Ambassador Robert Ford!

Here's [Ford in an interview with the BBC last October](#) about Ahrar al-Sham (emphasis added):

**Stephen Sackur BBC:** "Ok, let me ask bluntly, Ahrar al Sham (The Free Men of Syria) group, one of the most powerful groups you would call "moderate", is it really moderate when a group like that proclaims its desire to see Sharia as the driving force of a "future Syria".. which clearly makes comments which suggest that Alawites and Christians would find it very difficult to find a place in their Syria.... Are these moderate?? You regard this as moderation?"

**Robert Ford:** "This is how I define as a moderate in the Syrian context, Stephen; a moderate is a group that accepts there has to be a political negotiation and there has to be a political process after a transition government is set up.. a political process to determine the future permanent government of Syria.. That there must be pluralism in that process... and it's one that works with other groups/ factions in a pluralistic setting... **I don't agree at all with Ahrar al Sham's desires to set up an Islamic State (in Syria).. but I have to admit that they accept the needs to be a political negotiation..** I have to admit they're willing to work with other groups and they do on the ground with great effect...This is one of the reasons, they're strong as they are, as you mentioned... It's not a group I ever want my daughter to marry into... I don't agree with their vision of society...but **I would not call them Jihadis**, they're not looking to impose an Islamic State at sword point... Different, they're therefore, from alQaida... Different therefore from the Islamic State..And they're willing to accept even such things as Parliament...and some kind of government institutions... So, **yes they want Sharia** ... but the kind of Sharia they want may in fact, in the end, not look like the kind of Sharia the "Islamic State" already imposing over most of central and Eastern of Syria..."

Is it any surprise that Syria is in the current disastrous state, where hundreds of thousands have died in a war instigated by those who knew from the beginning would only benefit radical Islamist extremists? Is there no justice for those who push such murder and mayhem on such a grand scale? Today, as civilized people recognize [International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#), is Nuremberg dead?

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