

The US-Al Qaeda alliance in Syria and the fraud of the war on terror

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Twice during testimony this week before congressional committees on the Obama administration's request for an Authorization for the Use of Military Force resolution backing US aggression against Syria, Secretary of State John Kerry brushed aside questions about the predominant role played by Al Qaeda and its affiliates in the US-instigated civil war in Syria, insisting that the "opposition has increasingly become more defined by its moderation."

For the second time in a decade, US imperialism is preparing to launch a war based on lies about weapons of mass destruction and Al Qaeda. In 2003, Washington invaded Iraq to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein based on the claim that it possessed weapons of mass destruction and was prepared to turn them over to Al Qaeda. No such weapons existed and the Iraqi regime was an enemy of Al Qaeda.

Now, ten-and-a-half years later, the Obama administration is preparing a war against Syria based on a fabricated intelligence report attributing an alleged August 21 chemical weapons attack outside Damascus to the government of President of Bashar al-Assad, while falsely claiming that the so-called "rebels" are controlled by "moderate democrats," with the Al Qaeda elements representing an insignificant minority. Again, both claims are lies.

There is every reason to believe that the August 21 attack—carried out on the very day that UN weapons inspectors invited to Syria by Assad began their work—was carried out by the "rebels" themselves to provide the pretext for a US attack. On the verge of military defeat by Syrian government forces, they had everything to gain from such a turn of events, while the Assad regime had everything to lose.

As for Kerry's claims about the anti-Assad forces, Reuters news agency felt compelled to contradict the American secretary of state, reporting September 5 that

his "public assertions that moderate Syrian opposition groups are growing in influence appear to be at odds with estimates by US and European intelligence sources and nongovernmental experts, who say Islamic extremists remain by far the fiercest and best-organized rebel elements."

As Kerry was extolling the democratic virtues of the "rebels" on Wednesday, jihadist militias were laying siege to the Christian village of Maalula, north of Damascus, seizing high ground and shelling defenseless civilian neighborhoods and churches and threatening to unleash a sectarian bloodbath.

This is but the latest of countless atrocities carried out by the US-backed Islamist militias, which were funneled into Syria along with arms and funding from Washington and its allies with the aim of toppling the Assad regime and redrawing the political map of the Middle East. The main reason for the rush to direct US military intervention is the disintegration of this effort in the face of defeats on the battlefield as well as mounting popular hostility and revulsion on the part of the Syrian people.

Recent videos posted online have recorded the Islamist fighters' crimes. We caution our readers: you are looking at the handiwork of a depraved organization that functions as an ally of the US government, which is working to bring it to power.

These acts include the roadside execution of three truck drivers for the "crime" of being members of the Alawite minority. (One of the drivers tells the killers, "We're just trying to earn a living.")

They also include the beheading of a Catholic priest. Another video recently smuggled out of Syria by a disgusted defector from the "rebel" camp shows a mass execution of defenseless Syrian soldiers who have been taken prisoner.

These atrocities go largely unreported in the corporate-controlled media, which dedicate their efforts (with

decreasing success) to molding public opinion in support of war. When pressed on confirmed atrocities by these “rebels,” Kerry and other war supporters insist that only US bombing can prevent “radicalization.”

The politicians and media pundits advocating a “humanitarian” attack on Syria all invoke the estimated 100,000 victims of the country’s civil war as justification for US bombing. None of them acknowledge that this war was foisted on Syria by the US and other Western powers. They hide the fact that their proxies in this battle for regime-change, the Islamist militias, are responsible for much of the carnage.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an anti-Assad group, fully 40 percent of these casualties are Syrian soldiers and pro-government militiamen. How many civilians these fascist killing squads have murdered is not known, but they are engaged in continuous attacks on Alawites, Christians, Kurds and other minorities, as well as on secular Sunni Muslims.

Why is Kerry compelled to lie about the crimes of these elements? Why does he pretend that the non-existent “moderate opposition” and the empty shell of the “Free Syrian Army” are the real forces fighting the Assad regime?

The lies are aimed at covering up the reality that the US and its intelligence agencies have a close working relationship with Al Qaeda and its affiliates. This is not new. Washington traditionally employed right-wing Islamist groups to suppress left nationalist and socialist movements in the Middle East and beyond. It utilized such forces in the CIA overthrow of the Mossadegh government in Iran in 1953 and the CIA-backed military coup and mass killings in Indonesia in 1965.

Al Qaeda, which is the most well known of these forces, was created by the CIA and Pakistani intelligence, aided and financed by the Saudi monarchy, during the US-instigated war against the pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The continuation of these ties—evidenced by the current collaboration in Syria—explains many things. Why, for example, members of Al Qaeda who were well known to US intelligence were able to freely enter and operate within the US in the period leading up to their participation in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Why, as well, Washington evinced a decided lack of zeal in the hunt for Osama bin Laden until well after he had become a spent force, outliving his usefulness.

The impending US aggression against Syria underscores the monumental fraud of Washington’s war on terror,

aided and abetted by a servile media that deliberately withholds information which runs counter to US war propaganda. The main achievement of this twelve-year “war” has been the toppling of secular Arab regimes—Iraq, Libya and now Syria—that were hostile to Al Qaeda, and the strengthening of the fascistic Islamist terrorist movement, which now serves as US imperialism’s proxy army.

In Libya, just as in Syria today, US imperialism and its allies utilized these forces to effect regime-change, arming, training and providing air support for Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and similar elements. That intervention, justified, as today in Syria, on “humanitarian” grounds, killed thousands and left the country in ruins.

The way in which these terrorists are used as an instrument of imperialist foreign policy found a crude expression in a recent meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prince Bandar Bin-Sultan, the chief of Saudi intelligence and the key link between Washington and Riyadh. According to a leaked transcript of the encounter, in return for Russian acquiescence to regime-change in Syria, Bandar offered not only oil and gas deals, but “a guarantee to protect the Winter Olympics” next year in Sochi, Russia from terrorist attacks by Chechen Islamists. Bandar assured Putin that these groups were “controlled by us” and could be instigated or restrained as it suited Saudi and US interests.

The criminal US intervention in Syria, utilizing Al Qaeda, and now the turn to a direct and unprovoked military assault that threatens to ignite a regional and even world war, have exposed the descent of US foreign policy into the depths of criminality under the presidency of Barack Obama.



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