



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 19, 2017

U.S. Calls for Air Strikes on Pro-Syrian Forces for Building Defenses

The U.S.-led coalition waged an air strike against a pro-Syrian militia near the Jordanian border on May 18, U.S. defense officials told media reporters, saying “it appeared” the Syrian forces were poised to attack an area that included U.S. advisors.

“The coalition commander assessed the threat and after shows of force didn’t stop the regime forces and those forces refused to move out of the deconfliction zone, the commander on the ground called for the air strike as a matter of force protection,” a senior U.S. defense official told Fox News.



“[The Syrians] were building a fighting position” about 55 kilometers [34 miles] from a U.S.-coalition base close to At Tanf, where advisors train members of the Syrian Democratic Forces and Syrian Arab Coalition, a second official told the Associated Press.

However, the Russian government, which has been supportive of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government, was critical of the coalition action. Russia’s deputy foreign minister Gennady Gatilov said the destruction of the convoy was a “breach of Syrian sovereignty.”

“Any military actions that lead to a deterioration in the situation in Syria obviously impact the political process,” said Gatilov. “Such actions that were carried out against the Syrian armed forces ... this is completely unacceptable.”

The *Los Angeles Times* on May 18 cited a report from coalition officials stating that U.S. commanders became concerned when they saw tanks, bulldozers and other heavy equipment advance into a “de-confliction” zone without authorization near a base where U.S. forces were located. (The officials requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.)

The *Times* did not report from whom Syrian forces should receive “authorization” within their own sovereign country.

It was not clear if the advancing forces were Syrian army troops or other pro-government allies, but they were flying Syrian flags and began constructing berms and fighting positions, the officials said.

A CNN report quoted a statement issued by Operation Inherent Resolve, the official name for the coalition supposedly fighting the ISIS terrorists. The statement said the pro-Assad militias “posed a threat to U.S. and partner forces at At Tanf,” a remote base in southern Syria near the Syria-Jordan-Iraq border. CNN repeated the official line that coalition advisors have used the base to train “Vetted Syrian Opposition” to aid the fight against ISIS.

CNN cited a statement from an unnamed U.S. official that two U.S. aircraft were dispatched as a “show of force” to get the Syrian vehicles to turn around.



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An online report posted on the Al-Masdar News (AMN) website cited a military source in Damascus alleging that the coalition jet that struck the Syrian Arab Army's (SAA) positions was actually Jordanian, not a U.S. warplane.

The Syrian government reported that the air strike killed a number of people and asserted it revealed the "falseness" of the coalition's claim to be solely fighting Islamic State (ISIS) in the war-torn country. "The Syrian Arab Army is fighting terrorism on its territory, and no party has the right to determine the course of its operations," an unnamed source told AFP.

U.K.-based *Sky News* reported that U.S. defense secretary General James Mattis denied the destruction of the convoy, which included a number of tanks, marked an escalation of America's intervention in Syria. Mattis said: "We are not increasing our role in the Syrian civil war. But we will defend our troops."

Many unanswered questions remain following these latest U.S.-led coalition military actions, including why the United States is again intervening in a foreign conflict, and even whether our actions in Syria are being conducted in opposition to ISIS or are actually helping ISIS. We discussed some of these points in [our article posted on May 5](#).

While the conflict in Syria is generally portrayed as a civil war waged by rebels trying to remove Bashar al-Assad from power, many reports ignore the fact that Assad, while admittedly autocratic, is certainly not sympathetic to Islamic terrorism.

[The New American reported back in 2013](#) that during a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 21 of that year, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) warned during debate on a bill that authorized "critical support to the Syrian opposition through provision of military assistance, training, and additional humanitarian support": "This is an important moment. You will be funding, today, the allies of al Qaeda."

Paul offered two amendments to the bill — officially styled the Syria Transition Support Act — one that would have forbidden the transfer of weapons to the rebel forces fighting to oust the government of Bashar al-Asad, and another that would have prevented the use of U.S. military armed forces in Syria.

Both of Paul's amendments were rejected by the committee.

In an exclusive interview with *The New American*, Senator Paul pointed out the irony in the fact that the original Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) enacted after September 11, 2001 called for finding and destroying al-Qaeda, while the legislation passed on May 21 by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would arm known associates of that very organization. "These people [Syrian rebels] will say they love America knowing that that's how to get weapons. They lie to us and then shoot us in the back," Paul explained.

The report cited a Reuters article from August 2012, which detailed a secret order signed by former President Obama providing support to Syrian rebel forces opposing the Assad regime and noted, "Recent news reports from the region have suggested that the influence and numbers of Islamist militants, some of them connected to al Qaeda or its affiliates, have been growing among Assad's opponents."

Our government has justified sending aid to the anti-Assad rebels and even troops on the ground by asserting we are there to defeat ISIS. But in reality, the rebels fighting Assad have, themselves, allied themselves with Islamic terrorists from al-Qaeda and ISIS.



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As we noted in our May 5 article:

Moving ahead several years, the United States is not only providing weapons to those Syrian rebels whose loyalties and objectives are highly questionable, we have followed up with boots on the ground in that beleaguered land.

We apparently have not learned anything from our government's campaign to remove Saddam Hussein in Iraq, thereby destabilizing that country. It was the power vacuum that resulted from that destabilization that allowed ISIS to evolve from a rag-tag militia to a major terrorist player in the region. Assad is the only force maintaining any stability in Syria. If he is toppled, the ISIS terrorists will expand their reach across Syria all the way to the Mediterranean — and to the very borders of Israel.

Americans should demand that our government not aid and abet this terrorist jihad.

Photo of Bashar al-Assad: Voice of America news [via Wikipedia](#)

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