



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 26, 2013

U.S. Involvement in Syrian War Becoming More Apparent

America's involvement in covert warfare in Syria is becoming more well known as the Associated Press, among other mainstream media, has begun reporting about U.S. training and arming of Syrian rebel fighters, other than the leading Free Syrian Army rebel group.



Officials who spoke on conditions of anonymity have indicated that the training of Syrian rebels is being run by American intelligence, as well as British and French. The AP noted that the CIA has been helping facilitate the distribution of weapons to such groups for over a year.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters Monday,

[The United States has] provided some logistical nonlethal support that has also come in handy for the Syrian rebels who are, again, fighting a regime that is not hesitating to use the military might of that regime against its own people. That is something we're going to continue to work to bring to an end.

But there is increasing evidence that the "rebels" are not very different from the regime they are attempting to overthrow. For instance, rebel groups have been guilty of terroristic activities, such as the four suicide bombings in Aleppo last October that killed approximately 40 civilians and wounded many more.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration has not been forthcoming with details on the extent of U.S. military training of the rebels, and has insisted that it is not providing them with weapons, though there are a number of reports contrary to that assertion.

AntiWar.com [reports](#) that while the United States is not sending American weapons directly to the rebels, they continue indirectly to help the opposition forces obtain weapons. It writes, "The smuggling has been going on for nearly a year now, with the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] nations, particularly Qatar and Saudi Arabia, leading the way in sending arms to Turkey, where the CIA sees to it they find their way to the border crossings."

Reports indicate that there has been a rise in the number of weapons flights to the region. For instance, the *New York Times* reported on Monday that Turkey has increased military aid to Syria's opposition with secret airlifts of arms and equipment.

AntiWar.com contends, "The U.S. involvement in smuggling weaponry to the increasingly sectarian civil war is liable to strain their relations with border nations, particularly Iraq which is seeing a surge in attacks from al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which is closely affiliated with Syria's rebels and likely enjoying spillover perks from the arms smuggling operation next door."

Though the mainstream media is just beginning to talk about the extent of the American involvement in the Syrian civil war, it has been going on for quite some time. Just hours after President Obama was



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reelected, British Prime Minister David Cameron called for the United States to do more to “shape the opposition” into an effective force and expedite the process of overthrowing the Assad regime.

But the involvement precedes Obama’s reelection. Last March, a leaked e-mail by Reva Bhalla, director of analysis for the Austin, Texas-based global intelligence firm Stratfor, revealed details of a December 6 Pentagon meeting attended by members of the U.S. Air Force Strategic Studies Group, as well as other military officers.

Bhalla learned that despite official assertions by the U.S. government, there were already NATO powers on the ground in Syria. The e-mail states:

After a couple hours of talking, they said without saying that SOF [Special Operations Forces] teams (presumably from US, UK, France, Jordan, Turkey) are already on the ground focused on recce [reconnaissance] missions and training opposition forces.

[The mission’s purpose is to] commit guerrilla attacks, assassination campaigns, try to break the back of the Alawite forces, elicit collapse from within.

According to Bhalla’s e-mail, the goal was to “prepare contingencies and be ready to act within 2-3 months.”

At that December 6 meeting, officials voiced concerns over an air campaign in Syria because of both the country’s geography and its air defenses.

WikiLeaks published the e-mail in its Global Intelligence Files — which it says contain over five million e-mails from Stratfor — noting that they “reveal the inner workings of a company that fronts as an intelligence publisher, but provides confidential intelligence services to large corporations, such as Bhopal’s Dow Chemical Co., Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, and government agencies, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Marines and the U.S. Defence [sic] Intelligence Agency.”

In addition, according to [World Net Daily](#), “Several knowledgeable Egyptian and Arab security officials claimed the U.S., Turkey, and Jordan were running a training base for the Syrian rebels in the Jordanian town of Safawi in the country’s northern desert region.”

Those claims confirmed what former FBI translator Sibel Edmonds [said](#) about hundreds of NATO and American troops arriving on the Syrian border in December for the purposes of training militants to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

According to Edmonds, an Iraqi journalist confirmed that U.S. forces vacated the Ain al-Assad Air Base in Iraq as part of President Obama’s so-called “drawdown of troops,” but rather than being sent home, the soldiers were transferred into Jordan. Edmonds added that she was informed by another source that “soldiers who speak languages other than Arabic” have been making their way through Jordan, just miles from the border of Syria. Some of those troops were believed to be NATO/American-affiliated, she added.

According to [Yahoo News](#):

The training in Jordan, however, suggests the U.S. help is aimed somewhat at enhancing the rebels’ capacity in southern Syria.... Despite months of U.S. and international support to build a cohesive political movement, Syria’s fractured opposition is still struggling to rally Syrians behind a common post-Assad vision. And the opposition coalition appears as much hampered by its political infighting as its military deficiencies against an Assad regime arsenal of tanks, fighter jets and Scud missiles.



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But GOP criticism from Congress that the federal government has not done enough to aid the rebels has forced the Obama administration to put some of its efforts in Syria on display.

Earlier this year, for instance, President Obama [released](#) a video on the White House website wherein he announced his decision to send \$155 million in humanitarian aid to the rebels:

I want to speak directly to the people of Syria. This new aid will mean more warm clothing for children and medicine for the elderly; flour and wheat for your families and blankets, boots and stoves for those huddled in damaged buildings.

It will mean health care for victims of sexual violence and field hospitals for the wounded. Even as we work to end the violence against you, this aid will help address some of the immediate needs you face each day.

Photo of Syrian rebel fighter: AP Images



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