



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 13, 2012

Al-Qaeda & the West Back Syrian Rebels Against Assad

Western governments and the notorious al-Qaeda terror network have teamed up to bring down the relatively secular dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, eerily reminiscent of the “regime change” operation in Libya supported by both NATO and a broad coalition of well-known Islamic terrorists on the ground.

Current al-Qaeda boss Ayman al-Zawahiri (left) [released a video](#) over the weekend [calling on Muslims](#) around the world to join Syrian rebels in overthrowing the brutal Assad government, saying the heavily armed insurgents could not depend on the West for assistance. The Obama administration and a coalition of Western leaders, meanwhile, have been [demanding](#) that other governments support the uprising in Syria as well.



Much of the international press has portrayed the Syrian conflict so far as a largely peaceful “pro-democracy” protest movement that is being brutally quashed by a bloody tyrant. And indeed, thousands have already been killed on both sides, according to United Nations estimates.

Despite the misleading media portrayal, however, analysts have [been aware](#) of the overwhelming role played by Islamic extremists in the Syrian regime-change operation almost since it began. Open support from the head of al-Qaeda only served to further confirm what was already widely known by governments and experts on the situation.

“Wounded Syria still bleeds day after day, while the butcher, son of the butcher Bashar bin Hafez [Hafez al-Assad], is not deterred to stop,” terror chief Zawahiri [said](#) during the 8-minute video posted online on Saturday. “But the resistance of our people in Syria despite all the pain, sacrifice and bloodshed escalates and grows.”

According to an Iraqi intelligence official [cited](#) by the Associated Press, fighters linked to al-Qaeda have already been flowing into Syria from Iraq to assist in the revolution. And recent blasts that left dozens dead in some of Syria’s biggest cities have been blamed on al-Qaeda — [even by U.S. officials](#).

Islamic extremists from throughout the Muslim world have played a key part in the uprising from the beginning — especially the Muslim Brotherhood, which is officially banned in Syria. But despite Assad’s claims that terrorists and “armed gangs” directed from abroad were behind the violence — “protesters” were killing police and burning down government buildings even in the first few days of unrest — the establishment press has painted a highly inaccurate picture thus far.

As numerous American and British intelligence officials have [explained](#), the West has also been a key instigator of the revolution — funneling arms and even special forces to the Syrian rebels since at least



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early last year. And the U.S. government, meanwhile, has been covertly funding Syrian opposition groups for years, diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks show.

In the recently released al-Qaeda video, entitled “Onward, Lions of Syria,” Zawahiri said a Muslim man has a duty to help “his brothers in Syria with all that he can — with his life, money, opinion, as well as information.” Al-Qaeda issued similar statements in the run-up to the NATO war on Libya, which was led on the ground largely by a coalition of Islamic extremists linked to the terror group.

In another al-Qaeda film aimed at Syrian insurgents which was posted last year, Zawahiri claimed that the U.S. and Israeli governments were being insincere in their support for the revolution — he even called on the fighters to target the West as well. The most recent video, however, was more moderate in its criticism of Western and Arab governments.

“Our people in Syria, don’t rely on the West or the United States or Arab governments and Turkey,” Zawahiri told the insurgents, calling the Arab League regimes corrupt. “You know better what they are planning against you.”

A resolution backed by the “Arab League” — a coalition composed primarily of Middle Eastern and North African dictatorships — called for regime change in Syria and demanded that Assad step down. But the measure was [vetoed](#) earlier this month by the governments of Russia and China in the United Nations Security Council.

The Russian government, a key strategic ally of the Syrian dictatorship, sells the Assad regime weapons and possesses an important naval base there. And after NATO’s devastating war on Libya — instigated under similar circumstances using a UN resolution — Russia has refused to support any more UN action in the region that could lead to further destabilization.

But following the veto, Western leaders and especially the Obama administration immediately vowed to step up their efforts to force “President” Assad to step down. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton even threatened to form a “Friends of Democratic Syria” alliance to support the revolutionaries.

[Sounding suspiciously like Hillary Clinton](#) and an exiled opposition group styling itself the “Syrian National Council,” al-Qaeda chief Zawahiri said Assad had to go at all costs. “If we want freedom, we must be liberated from this regime. If we want justice, we must retaliate against this regime,” he said in the video. “Continue your revolt and anger; don’t accept anything else apart from independent, respectful governments.”

Zawahiri, former al-Qaeda boss Osama bin Laden’s chief deputy, supposedly took over the terror network after bin Laden was [reportedly assassinated by the Obama administration](#). Before that, according to slain Russian defector Alexander Litvinenko, Zawahiri was [trained in Russia](#) sometime around 1996.

Prior to apparently turning against the U.S. government, however, al-Qaeda was [trained, armed, and funded by American tax dollars](#). During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the CIA and Pakistani intelligence played a crucial role in radicalizing and even creating the network of Islamic extremists in the first place.

More recently, top al-Qaeda leaders once again fought with support from U.S. and Western forces in the NATO war on Libya. Senior al-Qaeda terror masters, including [Abdelhakim Belhaj, Abu Sufian Ibrahim bin Qumu, and Abdul Hakim al-Hasidi](#), all helped lead Libyan rebel forces to victory with overwhelming air superiority delivered by President Obama — [leaving tens of thousands dead, a questionable regime](#)



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[in power](#), and [heavy weaponry in the hands of terrorists all across the region](#).

The “former” terrorists backed by the U.S. government have gone on to occupy key positions in the new [Libyan regime](#), mostly sharing power with ex-Gadhafi officials. And if history does indeed repeat itself, a similar situation could occur in Syria in the not-too-distant future as Christians across the nation [tremble](#) over the prospect of genocide if an Islamic dictatorship seizes power there.

Of course, many analysts and experts on U.S. foreign policy [suspect](#) that regime change in Syria is merely a stepping stone on the path to a broader war against Iran. And the Chinese and Russian governments, key allies of the Iranian dictatorship, have warned that a Western attack on Iran could force them to join the fray.

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