



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on April 12, 2014

American-Backed Syrian Rebels Don't Mind Al-Qaeda Cohorts

As if we needed any more evidence that the Obama administration-backed “rebels” in Syria are fighting alongside our avowed enemy, al-Qaeda, a story published days ago in Britain’s *The Independent* puts another brick in that wall. The paper reports:

The rebel leader touted as the West’s last hope to stem the tide of extreme jihadist groups in Syria has said he will not fight against al-Qa’ida, and openly admits to battling alongside them.



Speaking from a safe house on the outskirts of the Turkish town of Antakya, Jamal Maarouf, the leader of the Syrian Revolutionary Front (SRF) told *The Independent* that the fight against al-Qa’ida was “not our problem” and admitted his fighters conduct joint operations with Jabhat al-Nusra — the official al-Qa’ida branch in Syria.

Later, Maarouf reportedly said, “It’s clear that I’m not fighting against al-Qa’ida. This is a problem outside of Syria’s border, so it’s not our problem. I don’t have a problem with anyone who fights against the regime inside Syria.”

In June 2013, President Obama approved the shipment of weapons from the United States to opposition forces in Syria.

On August 1, 2012, Reuters reported on a secret order signed by President Obama providing support to Syrian rebel forces opposing the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Reuters wrote that “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.”

The next day, *The New American* covered the same story, [writing](#) that: “Western governments, brutal Sunni-Arab dictatorships, an assortment of terror groups including al-Qaeda, and other powerful interests have all been backing the uprising since long before violence even broke out last year.”

Later that same day, in a story covering the violence of the Syrian uprising, the BBC reported:

The al-Qaeda-styled group in Syria is Jabhat al-Nusra li-Ahl al-Sham (the Front for the Protection of the Syrian People).

Like other al-Qaeda affiliated groups, al-Nusra’s statements and videos are usually issued by its own media group, al-Manara al-Baida (the White Minaret) in Syria.

Al-Nusra has claimed responsibility for several attacks against the Syrian army, security and shabiha (state-sponsored thugs) since it announced its formation early this year.

Finally, under a headline reading “Al-Qaida turns tide for rebels in battle for eastern Syria,” *The Guardian* (U.K.) reported:

They try to hide their presence. “Some people are worried about carrying the [black] flags,” said



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Abu Khuder. "They fear America will come and fight us. So we fight in secret. Why give Bashar and the west a pretext?" But their existence is common knowledge in Mohassen. Even passers-by joke with the men about car bombs and IEDs [improvised explosive devices].

According to Abu Khuder, his men are working closely with the military council that commands the Free Syrian Army brigades in the region. "We meet almost every day," he said. "We have clear instructions from our [al-Qaida] leadership that if the FSA need our help we should give it. We help them with IEDs and car bombs. Our main talent is in the bombing operations." Abu Khuder's men had a lot of experience in bomb-making from Iraq and elsewhere, he added.

The foregoing accounts of the hostilities in Syria provide nearly irrefutable evidence that numerous al-Qaeda militants are found among the ranks of Syrian rebels (particularly within the Free Syrian Army), including among those filling leadership roles within those forces.

When these facts are viewed together with the admissions made to *The Independent* by Jamal Maarouf, the leader of the Syrian Revolutionary Front, it would be very hard for President Obama to argue that he is not arming the very group he has declared to be the greatest threat to national security and the group that he and his predecessor identified as responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans on September 11, 2001.

Perhaps, some may argue, President Obama is not aware of the presence of al-Qaeda militants in the Syrian opposition. Unless he doesn't talk to members of his cabinet, such an assertion is unsupportable.

At a press conference in May 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta admitted, "We do have intelligence that indicates an al-Qaeda presence in Syria." So much for not knowing.

The presence of al-Qaeda operatives in the leadership of the so-called Syrian rebellion is nothing new. In December 2013, the *Washington Post* acknowledged this unholy alliance, but with a decidedly pro-White House twist:

The United States government knowingly contributed to the territorial gains of radical Islamists allied to our gravest enemy in an effort to hijack the Syrian Revolution and install Sharia Law in a very rich and very powerful country. In an effort to thwart the fear of the public that the U.S. would be supporting radical Jihadists, the secretary of state made a statement that he was certain that only 25 percent of the rebels were Jihadists. There are roughly a hundred eighty thousand Syrian Rebels, and as of now an estimated one hundred thousand of those rebels fall under the command of the Islamic Front.

In light of the overwhelming evidence from such a variety of Establishment and alternative sources of the leadership role assumed by al-Qaeda over the rebel forces he has now ordered armed with American weaponry, one very important and potentially historic question remains: Is President Obama guilty of supporting al-Qaeda? If so, should he be subject to indefinite detention under the terms of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)?

As *The New American* has chronicled since it was first proposed, the NDAA purportedly authorizes the president of the United States to deploy the armed forces to apprehend and indefinitely detain anyone suspected of providing support to terrorists. Section 1021 of the NDAA reads in relevant part:

Congress affirms that the authority of the President to use all necessary and appropriate force pursuant to the Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107-40; 50 U.S.C.1541 note) includes the authority for the Armed Forces of the United States to detain covered persons (as



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defined in subsection (b)) pending disposition under the law of war.

A covered person under this section is any person as follows:

A person who was a part of or substantially supported al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners, including any person who has committed a belligerent act or has directly supported such hostilities in aid of such enemy forces.

And, finally: “Detention under the law of war without trial until the end of the hostilities authorized by the Authorization for Use of Military Force.”

A plain reading of Section 1021 reveals, then, that anyone who is found to have “substantially supported” al-Qaeda or associated forces can be detained by the military until the end of the War on Terror.

The president isn’t the only federal official who stands to be inculpated for violating the NDAA. On April 8, *Time* magazine reported:

Secretary of State John Kerry beat back Republican charges Tuesday that the Obama Administration has not done enough to end the three-year Syrian civil war that has now killed 150,000 people.

“I know there are a lot of concerns about our Syrian policy,” Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker, the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said during a congressional hearing on Capitol Hill. “We have no policy from what I can tell, other than again, allowing people to kill each other off. And us making commitments to the opposition that we do not honor, and leaving them in refugee camps and basically stranded without the support we committed to them on the front end.”

Seems the powerful in both major political parties are anxious to arm people known to have strong ties to this country’s sworn enemies.

If the laws passed by Congress apply only to the American people and not to the president or members of Congress themselves, then the United States has become an aristocracy, whose ruling class is not governed by the laws they pass.

Photo of Syrian rebels: AP Images

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