



## Obama Reelection Expands Syrian Civil War Involvement

The reelection of President Barack Hussein Obama may coincide with an escalation from [covert](#) to open warfare by the United States and its NATO allies against the Assad regime in Syria. Reports from the United Kingdom indicate that mere hours after Obama's reelection, British Prime Minister David Cameron was already calling for the United States and its allies to do more to "shape the opposition" into a more effective force, and speed the process of overthrowing the government of Syria.



An article for the Associated Press published in many major American newspapers on the day after America's presidential election determined that the president, whose administration has repeatedly supported the overthrow of stable but despotic regimes throughout the Middle East (regimes quickly replaced by governments dedicated to an expansionist Islamist agenda) will have another four years to continue to pursue his foreign policy agenda. According to the AP, the expanded efforts by the United States and its allies to overthrow the Assad government will significantly increase the level of commitment to military conflict with Syria:

Western efforts to oust Syrian President Bashar Assad shifted dramatically Wednesday, with Britain announcing it will deal directly with rebel military leaders and Turkey saying NATO members have discussed using Patriot missiles to protect a safe zone inside Syria....

British Prime Minister David Cameron, visiting a camp Wednesday for Syrian refugees in Jordan, said the U.S., Britain and other allies should do more to "shape the opposition" into a coherent force and open channels of communication directly with rebel military commanders.

Previously, Britain and the U.S. have acknowledged contacts only with exile groups and political opposition figures — some connected to rebel forces — inside Syria.

"There is an opportunity for Britain, for America, for Saudi Arabia, Jordan and like-minded allies to come together and try to help shape the opposition, outside Syria and inside Syria," Cameron said. "And try to help them achieve their goal, which is our goal of a Syria without Assad."

Previous efforts by the Obama administration in support of various movements and political parties have seen the U.S. government involved in the "regime change" that took place in Egypt and Libya. Now, the new governments in both those countries have proven either [incapable or unwilling](#) to protect American properties in their respective territories. While the September 11 attacks on the U.S. "consulate" in Libya have gotten a degree of media coverage because of the murder of the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans serving in an official capacity in that nation, the attacks on the [embassy in Cairo](#) have largely been forgotten.

With prospects for an expanded U.S. role in the Syrian civil war looming closer, some critics interpreted the choice between presidential candidates as a choice between two possible wars in the Middle East. While Republican candidate Mitt Romney favored an aggressive stance against Iran, the anti-Assad



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rhetoric that has come from the Obama administration has clearly signaled a commitment by Obama to support the rebels in Syria. As [Raven Clabough wrote several months ago for \*The New American\*](#), the Obama administration has already been caught engaging in disinformation campaigns regarding foreign support for the Assad government:

Recently, the United States has made claims that Russia is shipping weapons to Syria, but the *New York Times* [reports](#) that a senior Defense Department official admitted that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton intentionally made false claims regarding a shipment of Russian weapons in order to “put the Russians in a difficult position.”

The *Times* reports, “Mrs. Clinton’s claim about the helicopters, administration officials said, is part of a calculated effort to raise the pressure on Russia to abandon President Bashar al-Assad, its main ally in the Middle East.”

Such accusations can not only serve to pressure potential opponents in such a conflict, but can also be utilized as a purported justification for the commitment of American arms or materiel.

An [article](#) for the *Christian Science Monitor* maintained that Syrian rebels clearly perceive Obama as their advocate:

Syrian rebels reportedly fired at the presidential palace in [Damascus](#) today, stepping up their campaign of targeting those close to [President Bashar al-Assad](#)’s regime even as many push the now safely reelected [US President Barack Obama](#) to move more urgently in [Syria](#)....

Many hope that a more organized and inclusive opposition, combined with yesterday’s reelection of Obama in the [United States](#), will result in a stronger stance in Syria.

“We hope that Barack Obama can help us just finish this situation and stop [the] killing and losing more lives and more civilians,” Ahmad, from the Revolutionary Council in Damascus, told the *Guardian*.

Other regional steps on Syria were made soon after Obama’s reelection. The AP reports that [Turkey](#) spoke up to say, along with its allies, it was considering setting up a protected safe zone inside Syrian borders.

For a president who based his first presidential campaign on an ostensibly anti-interventionist agenda for the Middle East, Obama’s record for the past few years — especially in the aftermath of the “Arab Spring” — has been marked by an extremely aggressive pattern of intervention. Whether a Romney presidency would have simply exacerbated a continuing trend of recent American presidents is now consigned to the realm of “What if?” It is a matter of record that the Republican candidate [favored an expanded interventionist role](#) in Iran and Syria. What is certain is that both the Syrian rebels and America’s allies anticipate aggressive U.S. support for the overthrow of President Assad. In the weeks leading up to the U.S. elections, even American media outlets were noting the growing influence of al-Qaeda in the ranks of the Syrian rebels. [As USA Today reported on October 23](#):

“Al-Qaeda is hijacking the revolution and diverting it from its original purpose, which was toppling the regime” of President Bashar Assad, said Abu Chin Orwa’a in Idlib province. Orwa’a is a member of the National Unity Battalion, a group fighting under the banner of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which says it is resisting involvement by extremist foreign fighters.

“They are manipulating it by hitting the religious nerves of the people,” Orwa’a said.

On Monday, Jordanian authorities charged a group of 11 men linked to al-Qaeda with planning to



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attack shopping malls and Western diplomatic missions in Jordan's capital city, Amman. Jordan said the men armed themselves with explosives and mortar rockets smuggled across the border from Syria.

"These 11 terrorists were Jordanian nationals with clear ties to al-Qaeda targeting the security and stability of Jordan," said Sameeh Maaytah, Jordan's minister of state for media affairs and communications.

Middle East analysts say the arrest is the latest evidence that extremist Islamist groups are increasingly entering the fight in Syria, and may be getting weapons from Persian Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia meant for anti-Assad rebels. The Obama administration has said it is helping those states to deliver weapons to Syria.

The pivotal role that al-Qaeda is playing in the ranks of Syrian rebels has been a matter of public record since at least [last July](#). Now, in Syria as well as in Libya, U.S. intervention may expand the influence of an organization that insists it is at war with these United States.

*Photo: In this Nov. 4, 2012 photo, a sniper of the Ahmad Assaf Syrian rebel platoon takes aim at Syrian army positions in Aleppo, Syria: AP Images*



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