



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 10, 2013

Top Syrian Rebel Group Merges With Al-Qaeda in Iraq

One of the most prominent and powerful rebel factions fighting on behalf of the [Obama administration-backed](#) “regime change” operation in Syria formally announced that it was merging with al-Qaeda in Iraq, sparking fresh concerns about the U.S. government arming, training, and funding the so-called “revolution.” The latest news comes on the heels of reports that the war-torn nation is [on the verge of becoming a haven for Islamic extremists](#) on par with Afghanistan and Iraq as foreign jihadists continue flooding into Syria.



Two days before the explosive announcement, purported al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri called on all Islamic fighters in Syria to join together in the bid to oust the existing regime and seize power. “Do all you can to ensure that the fruit of your struggle, God willing, is an Islamic state,” the terror leader said about the conflict in his most recent message. The new regime, he added, should be “a state that would be a building stone in the return of the rightly-guided caliphate.”

More than a year ago, Zawahiri [urged Islamist forces from around the world to join the battle](#), saying that 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.” The call attracted serious concerns among analysts monitoring the conflict, warning that Western support for the “revolution” was going to bring serious and potentially deadly “blowback” that would last for generations.

The recent merger of the two al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist groups, known as the “Islamic State in Iraq” and “Jabhat al-Nusra,” will now be called the “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.” The official announcement was made by Iraqi al-Qaeda chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in an audio message earlier this week that was spread on Islamist websites. Syrian jihadist sources also [confirmed](#) the merger, which was reportedly met with celebration among Islamists.

It is time to announce to the Levantine people and the whole world that Jabhat al-Nusra is merely an extension and part of the Islamic State of Iraq,” al-Baghdadi was quoted as saying in the message, referring to the population inhabiting a region stretching from Turkey to Egypt. The al-Qaeda boss said his Iraqi organization would offer half of its budget to the Syrian “revolution” and implied that the terrorist entity created by the merger would share the same leadership.

According to the Associated Press, which reported the news on April 9, the new jihadist alliance could “become a dominant player” in whatever new regime eventually replaces the secular dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad — assuming, of course, that it does actually collapse in the face of the overwhelming international onslaught. The risks inherent in such a scenario include, among others, the possibility that al-Qaeda militants could seize the existing autocracy’s chemical-weapons arsenal and eventually turn it on Israel or the West in general.

Indeed, multiple rebel factions involved in the war have already [stated publicly](#) that once they overthrow Assad and build an Islamic theocracy based on sharia law in Syria, America and Israel will be



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the next targets. Hundreds of European Islamists who joined the “revolution” also [pose a potential threat to Europe](#) if and when they return home, experts say.

The establishment press around the world has largely attempted to downplay the role of al-Qaeda and other jihadists in fighting Assad — not to mention the U.S. government’s [crucial part in creating and funding the opposition](#) even before actual war broke out. Presumably the half-baked effort to minimize the influence of extremist elements is aimed at bolstering non-existent public support for Western involvement in the conflict while hiding the fact that Obama and other foreign governments may be laying the ground work for a potential powder keg of “blowback.”

Analysts monitoring the conflict have long known that hardcore Islamists make up much of the “rebel” alliance. The global-government-promoting Council on Foreign Relations, which has also [played a key role in fomenting and deepening the Syrian bloodbath](#) in an effort to install its Muslim Brotherhood-dominated “Syrian National Coalition” in power, even [publicly acknowledged](#) that al-Qaeda forces were crucial to defeating Assad. The al-Nusra front, however, was [designated a terrorist organization](#) last year, though it is still doing much of the fighting as [foreign arms continue to flow mostly toward jihadist forces](#) in Syria.

The regime in Damascus, of course, has maintained from the start that its forces are fighting terrorists being armed, trained, and funded by Western powers and a motley assortment of Sunni Arab dictators. However, despite the false narrative peddled by much of the “mainstream” media about an alleged home-grown fight for “human rights” and “democracy,” even the AP has finally been forced to partially concede the subversive reality of what is happening on the ground.

“The new group, called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, underscores the growing confidence and muscle of Islamist radicals fighting on the rebel side in Syria’s civil war,” the news agency reported in an article about the merger. “It also bolsters the Syrian government’s assertions that the regime is battling terrorists and that the uprising is a foreign-backed plot.”

Analysts cited in reports agreed that the official merger will help bolster al-Qaeda’s already massive role in the battle, potentially helping its ruthless minions seize power if and when Assad is ultimately overthrown. “It will help them better position themselves in the period after Assad,” noted Director Bilal Saab with the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis, North America, about the announcement. “It does matter for them that they’re getting more materiel and more people and more expertise, especially Iraqi veterans who have really been vetted on the battlefield and who have fought coalition forces since 2003.”

Even the prime minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, is speaking out about the very real possibility that the consequences of the Obama administration backing “rebel” forces in Syria will be an unprecedented disaster. In an opinion piece published by the *Washington Post* on April 9, the Iraqi leader installed after the U.S. government’s “regime change” operation in 2003 called for an end to all arms transfers heading into Syria — both to the “rebels” and to the regime, which is being supplied by the governments ruling Russia and Iran.

“We have been mystified by what appears to be the widespread belief in the United States that any outcome in Syria that removes President Bashar al-Assad from power will be better than the status quo,” Maliki [wrote](#). “A Syria controlled in whole or part by al-Qaeda and its affiliates — an outcome that grows more likely by the day — would be more dangerous to both our countries than anything we’ve seen up to now. Americans should remember that an unintended consequence of arming insurgents in



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Afghanistan to fight the Soviets was [turning the country over to the Taliban and al-Qaeda.](#)"

In a bizarre ironic twist, warmongers in Congress on both sides of the aisle are now [pointing to the prospect of Obama-backed extremists taking over Syria as a justification to put U.S. troops on the ground.](#) Prominent members of the establishment wing in both the GOP and the Democrat party have recently called for stepping up American involvement in the conflict, which already includes [arming, training, and funding rebel forces.](#) Without congressional or constitutional authorization, Obama has also [surrounded Syria with American troops](#) along its [borders with Jordan](#) and [Turkey.](#)

Meanwhile, the Islamist regime installed in Libya following Obama's last lawless United Nations-approved war — [which also involved support for al Qaeda fighters to overthrow the existing government](#) — is now [pursuing "integration" with the terror regime in Sudan.](#) The Obama-backed ruling Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is receiving billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars and advanced military weaponry. Like the new Libyan regime, it is also [working to forge what both leaders called "one nation" with the genocidal Sudanese dictatorship](#) — officially listed as a state sponsor of terrorism by the U.S. State Department.

In Syria, an estimated 70,000 people have already been killed in the conflict — mostly civilians. Among the most ruthlessly targeted victims of rebel forces: The [Christian and Jewish minorities](#), which lived in relative peace under Assad's secular dictatorship. The [Obama-backed rebels have been accused of "ethnic cleansing"](#) aimed at extinguishing Christianity in Syria. Experts, however, say the worst is yet to come.

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