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## Syria Accuses US, Allies of Aiding 'Terrorists' on the Ground

Posted By John Glaser

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Syria accused the U.S. and its allies on Saturday of colluding with al Qaeda-linked militants to target the the government of Bashar al-Assad, as the aftermath of a string of bombings in Damascus and Aleppo by shadowy militant groups.

"Western countries and the United States, which made alliances to wage wars using the pretext of fighting terrorism, are now making alliances with the terrorists which Syria has been facing," Information Minister Adnan Hasan Mahmoud said.

The twin car bombing in Damascus on Wednesday which killed 55 raised renewed awareness that, as U.S. officials confirmed months ago, elements of al-Qaeda linked groups have joined Syrian rebels in the fight against the Assad regime. On Saturday, a group calling itself Al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility for the attack.

Elements of the opposition in Syria have denied any connection to the bombings, claiming the Assad regime was behind them. Accusations of ties to terrorism abound, as a Syrian rebel chief this week argued Assad was supporting al-Qaeda-linked groups (an obviously false claim).

But the Syrian government's accusations against the West do have a kernel of truth to them. The U.S. and its allies are in fact sending aid to the opposition, which even they have admitted contains elements of Islamic extremists and militant groups tied to al-Qaeda.

"This terrorist escalation using booby-trapped cars with tons of explosives to target the Syrian people ... is a continuation of the bloody terrorist tactic used between armed groups and al Qaeda, along with the international Western countries that support them with weapons and money," the Assad regime spokesman added.

The UN force overseeing the conflict in Syria and trying to enforce a ceasefire is at about half of its planned level, at 145 observers. Fighting during the weekend caused the deaths of a reported 15 people.