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Syrian No-Fly-Zone: A Bid to Save Al Qaeda

By Tony Cartalucci

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Recent strikes on Syria by Israel have been alleged to be part of a regional plan by the US, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel to establish a no-fly-zone (NFZ) over Syria, just as NATO did in Libya in 2011 effectively handing the entire nation over to Al Qaeda and now “Islamic State” terrorists. DEBKA File has suggested in its article, “Israel air strikes wiped out Russian hardware for thwarting US no-fly zone plan over Syria,” that:

High-ranking American military sources revealed Monday, Dec. 8, that Israel’s air strikes near Damascus the day before wiped out newly-arrived Russian hardware including missiles that were dispatched post haste to help Syria and Hizballah frustrate a US plan for a no-fly zone over northern Syria.

Regardless of the veracity of this report, attempts to justify and impose a NFZ over Syria has been a stated goal of Western policymakers since 2011 when a similar ploy was used under the guise of “humanitarian intervention” in Libya.

No-Fly-Zone to Protect Terrorist Mercenaries, Not “Civilians” or “Rebels”

Corporate-financier funded policymakers from the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) published an article in 2013 titled, “Jack Keane and Danielle Pletka: How to Stop Assad’s Slaughter,” claiming:

Syria is not Libya. Bashar Assad's troops are well armed, and his ground forces are waging successful campaigns against rebel forces across the country. But eliminating Assad's ability to take to the air and tilting the balance of power in favor of anti-Assad rebels—as the United States and its allies did with the fighters who eventually overthrew Moammar Gadhafi—is both achievable and advisable.

However, in Libya, NATO's "humanitarian" NFZ clearly was implemented not to protect innocent civilians, but to provide air cover for terrorist mercenaries armed and directed by NATO itself. These terrorists are now revealed to be Al Qaeda and the so-called "Islamic State" (ISIS). It is clear then that "Assad's slaughter" is in all actuality a war being waged upon the deprived ranks of Al Qaeda – from its Al Nusra front to ISIS.

From the beginning of Syria's conflict in 2011, the US State Department itself revealed Al Qaeda's Al Nusra Front was not only involved in early fighting, but had already established a nationwide presence carrying out hundreds of attacks in every major Syrian city. In an official statement by the US State Department designating Al Nusra as a foreign terrorist organization and as an alias for Al Qaeda in Iraq, it was reported that:

Since November 2011, al-Nusrah Front has claimed nearly 600 attacks – ranging from more than 40 suicide attacks to small arms and improvised explosive device operations – in major city centers including Damascus, Aleppo, Hamah, Dara, Homs, Idlib, and Dayr al-Zawr. During these attacks numerous innocent Syrians have been killed.

The widespread presence of Al Qaeda so early in the conflict is owed to the fact that the United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, since at least as early as 2007, conspired openly to use the terrorist organization to wage a regional proxy war against Iran and its allies, including Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Damascus' war, then, is not one being waged against its own people, nor against "pro-democracy rebels," but rather against a heavily armed front of sectarian militants backed from abroad seeking to invade, overthrow, and occupy the nation of Syria. This foreign-backed terrorist front, with the help of the Western media, is merely hiding behind the ever tenuous facade of genuine "rebellion."

One example in particular illustrates not only this reality – the fact that there are none and never have been "moderate rebels" – but also the fact that Western intervention predicated upon assisting nonexistent "moderate rebels" and "civilians" is a criminal conspiracy designed solely around regime change and imposing the West's will upon the nation and people of Syria.

Last month, it would be revealed that terrorists portrayed by the West as "moderate rebels" and allegedly "vetted" by the United States before being armed with advanced weaponry including anti-tank missiles were officially merged with Al Qaeda. The International Business Times would claim in its article, "Syria: Al-Nusra Jihadists 'Capture US TOW Anti-Tank Missiles' from Moderate Rebels," that:

Weaponry supplied by the US to moderate Syrian rebels was feared to have fallen into the hands of jihadist militants affiliated to al-Qaida after clashes between rival groups.

Islamist fighters with Jabhat al-Nusra seized control of large swathes of land in Jabal al-Zawiya, Idlib province, at the weekend, routing the US-backed groups the Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SFR) and Harakat Hazm, activists said.

Washington relied on SFR and Harakat Hazm to counter Isis (Islamic State) militants on the ground in Syria, complementing its air strikes.



*One Syrian rebel group supported in the past by the United States condemned the air strikes on Tuesday. **Harakat Hazm, a rebel group that received a shipment of U.S. anti-tank weapons in the spring, called the airstrikes “an attack on national sovereignty” and charged that foreign led attacks only strengthen the Assad regime.** The statement comes from a document, purportedly from the group, that has circulated online and was posted in English translation from a Twitter account called Syria Conflict Monitor. Several Syria experts, including the Brookings Doha Center’s Charles Lister, believe the document to be authentic. Despite attempts to claim Harakat Hazm had “fallen” to Al Qaeda, Harakat Hazm itself had already openly pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda a month beforehand. In September, the Daily Beast would report in its article, “Al Qaeda Plotters in Syria ‘Went Dark,’ U.S. Spies Say,” that Harakat Kazm condemned US airstrikes on ISIS and Al Nusra. The Daily Beast reported (emphasis added):*

The same article would also reveal that:

*Before the official statement, there were signs that Harakat Hazm was making alliances in Syria that could conflict with its role as a U.S. partner. In early Septemeber a Harakat Hazm official told a reporter for the L.A. Times: **“Inside Syria, we became labeled as secularists and feared Nusra Front was going to battle us...But Nusra doesn’t fight us, we actually fight alongside them. We like Nusra.”***

The US, NATO, Israel as the “Islamic State’s” Air Force

With this in mind, Syria’s allies must take all measures to ensure a no-fly-zone is not only politically unachievable, but tactically and strategically unachievable as well. Failure in Syria will open the flood gates of proxy terrorism and warfare upon Iran, then Russia and China. The world can ill-afford the continued primacy of a hegemonic power willing to use such tactics to achieve the already abhorrent, intolerable objective of global conquest. Just as in Libya where

genocidal sectarian extremists operating under the flag of Al Qaeda's regional franchises including the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) both now openly operating under the banner of ISIS, were thrust into power with NATO backing, so to does NATO plan on installing extremists into primacy across Syria. The goal is not simply the ruination of Syria, but the use of Syria as a springboard to wage war upon Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah, then turn NATO's terrorist mercenary force northeast toward Russia and then China.

To this end, the US, NATO – primarily Turkey – as well as Israel, have throughout the Syrian conflict provided arms, aid, equipment, and even airpower to Al Qaeda in their bid to violently overthrow the Syrian government. Just as was done in Libya, Al Qaeda's role in the fighting was covered up with the illusion of "moderate rebels" and "unarmed" "pro-democracy protesters." As the facade collapsed, an increasingly tangled and incoherent narrative has emerged to explain how the West is infusing the region with billions in military aid, and yet Al Qaeda rather than the West's fabled "moderates" have emerged as the dominate fighting force across the region.

The only explanation, and as was the plan from the very beginning, is that the US, NATO, Israel and other regional partners are intentionally building up and deploying Al Qaeda's various factions across the region to fight in an increasingly horrific, costly, proxy war.

The proposed "no-fly-zone" the West has been attempting to implement is simply rhetorical cover for providing Al Qaeda directly with air cover while preventing the only actual military force in the region fighting Al Qaeda, the Syrian Arab Army, from finally eliminating this scourge from within their borders and restoring order across their country and in turn, across the region.