

# Al-Qaeda in Syria: Pretext for Intervention

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Twin blasts targeting government security buildings rocked the northern Syrian city of Idlib on Monday, killing at least nine and wounding a hundred more, according to Syrian state TV. The attack followed a suicide bombing on Friday in the capital city of Damascus, which saw an additional nine killed.

According to [Reuters](#), the increasing frequency of such attacks signifies a shifting tactical emphasis from rebel forces toward the use of more “homemade bombs.” As a rebel spokesman ominously warned, “You are going to start seeing an escalation as we improve our techniques of bomb-making and delivery.”

This comes as evidence mounts of increasing al-Qaeda infiltration into Syrian opposition groups. As [DEBKAFfile](#) reported Monday: “The suicide bombings hitting Damascus and Idlib in the last 24 hours were the work of al-Qaeda in Iraq—AQI, whose operatives have been pouring into Syria in the last two weeks.”

“There’s no question that a lot of Syrians fought with al-Qaeda elements in Iraq and it’s likely that many rebels today learned bombing skills fighting there,” Joseph Holliday, from the Institute for the Study of War, added to [Reuters](#).

Instead of tempering calls for foreign intervention into Syria, however, al-Qaeda’s strengthening presence within the country appears likely to serve as the latest pretext used by imperial powers to further insert themselves into the crisis. As the [Washington Post](#) argued, opting not to provide further assistance to the rebel Free Syrian Army only cedes influence with the opposition to Islamic extremists.

“There is a real risk that frustrated members of the opposition will be driven toward extremism,” the Post writes, “adding a dangerous dimension to a revolt that is threatening to destabilize a wide arc of territory across the Middle East.”

Meanwhile, the right-wing [DEBKAFfile](#) reports that members of the Syrian opposition are already in Washington “imploring administration officials to abandon the U.S. policy of non-intervention in Syria. They warn that the rebel Free Syrian Army is falling into the clutches of al-Qaeda.”

Washington, though, has no real qualms with an increased influence of al-Qaeda or its affiliates. After all, the U.S. has a long history of allying itself with Islamic extremists in order to further its imperial ends. This can be seen as far back as Washington’s support for the Mujahideen against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and as recently as its support of Libyan rebel groups opposed to the government of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Using the rubric of the global “war on terror, Washington has also long used the menace of al-Qaeda as a tool to garner domestic and international support for its agenda of militarist expansion. After all, in practice, Washington’s “anti-terrorism” policies have done little more than strengthen al-Qaeda and its various offshoots.

For instance, in reporting on the expanded use of “signature” drone strikes in Yemen (which allow U.S. drone strikes within the country against unidentified targets), the [Washington Post](#) notes: “AQAP [al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] has significantly expanded in numbers, strength and territory since one of its top leaders, the U.S.-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, was killed in a CIA drone strike last year.”

(The fact that the U.S. drone campaign within Yemen, ostensibly instigated to combat the rise of AQAP, has led to the expansion of the terror group passes without notice from the *Post*.)

Much the same as AQAP, al-Qaeda in Syria will continue to be used as an excuse for enhanced Western military intervention into the country. Of course, the the true aim of Washington planners is not al-Qaeda, but remains, as the [World Socialist Web Site](#) observes, to target “Iran, as well as the oil and military interests of Russia and China in the region.”

If left unchecked, this destructive militarism of the U.S. shall only led to the further impoverishment of the nation’s already beleaguered working class, not to mention the grave imperilment of working people globally.

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