

CIA, Saudi Funding of Syria Al Qaeda Extremists Greater Than Previously Realized

By [Sputnik](#)

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New reports in the US media reveal that secret cooperation between the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Saudi Arabia to fund Daesh and other extreme Islamic groups in Syria was far greater than previously suspected, US scholars told Sputnik.

"The details about the Saudi funding should give very serious pause to Americans," Middle East expert and author Helena Cobban told Sputnik.

New details revealed in a New York Times report on Tuesday indicated that the US government and its secret agencies were trying to repeat in Syria the strategy they used against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan 35 years ago, Cobban stated.

"It all looks eerily like what happened in Afghanistan in the 1980s — a semi-clandestine and very hard to control CIA 'intervention,' backed up with huge amounts of Saudi money, and the ever-present Saudi support for the Wahhabist global agenda," she suggested.

However, the Islamic terrorists, including Osama bin Laden, whom the CIA supported in Afghanistan during the 1980s, eventually turned on the United States with devastating consequences and the same thing could happen now, Cobban cautioned.

"What could possibly go wrong? We might ask the widows and orphans of the September 11, 2001 attack that question," she said. The New York Times report revealed that the scale of US military and Saudi financial assistance to the Islamists in Syria was vastly greater than anything the Obama administration had previously admitted to, US author and Middle East affairs expert Dan Lazare told Sputnik.

"In the famous talk that [US Vice President] Joe Biden gave at Harvard's Kennedy School in October 2014... he said that the Gulf states 'poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of thousands of tons of military weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad'," Lazare noted.

However, according to the New York Times report, estimates have put the total cost of the arming and training effort at several billion dollars, Lazare pointed out.

"So the Saudi contribution alone was on the order of ten times greater than what Biden had indicated. That's huge," Lazare emphasized.

Cobban further noted that US diplomats openly fanned the flames of rebellion and civil war in Syria.

“There were the blatantly incendiary actions of Ambassador Robert Ford during the spring of 2011, when... he gave a lot of moral and political support to very activist figures in the opposition,” Cobban recalled.

According to the New York Times report, Lazare observed, the US government was well aware how much Saudi citizens continued to support terrorist groups, but maintained their close intelligence partnership with Riyadh anyway.

These were the same forces that bombed the World Trade Center in 2001, killing nearly 3,000 Americans, he concluded.

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