

Syria: “Why is the US Helping Al Qaeda and Other Terrorist Groups”: Rep Tulsi Gabbard

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

U.S. congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard has recently returned from Syria where she spent four days. She told [CNN](#) about her trip to the war-torn country.

During her visit, Gabbard had an appointment with President Bashar al-Assad, clergymen and citizens; she also visited a hospital.

According to her, the locals were glad to see the congresswoman and hoped that she would be able to reveal to the Congress the true state of things in the country. However, many asked her why America backs terrorists and supplies them with weapons. In the press release at her website, Gabbard said that she [couldn't answer this question](#).

The image is a screenshot of a press release from Tulsi Gabbard's official website. The header features her name 'TULSI GABBARD' in large blue letters, with 'CONGRESSWOMAN' and 'HAWAII'S 2ND DISTRICT' in smaller text above and below it. To the left of the text is a vertical image of a city skyline with a blue sky and clouds. The main title of the press release is 'Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard Returns From Syria with Renewed Calls: End Regime Change War in Syria Now'. Below the title, it says 'January 25, 2017 | Press Release'. The body of the text describes her return from a week-long visit to Syria, mentioning meetings with various Syrian leaders and the impact of the war. A specific quote is highlighted with a red rectangular border: '“As I visited with people from across the country, and heard heartbreaking stories of how this war has devastated their lives, I was asked, ‘Why is the United States and its allies helping al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups try to take over Syria? Syria did not attack the United States. Al-Qaeda did.’ I had no answer.”'. Another quote is underlined in red: '“I return to Washington, DC with even greater resolve to end our illegal war to overthrow the Syrian government. I call upon Congress and the new Administration to answer the pleas of the Syrian people immediately and support the Stop Arming Terrorists Act. We must stop directly and indirectly supporting terrorists—directly by providing weapons, training and logistical support to rebel groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIS; and indirectly through Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and Turkey, who, in turn, support these terrorist groups. We must end our war to overthrow the Syrian government and focus our attention on defeating al-Qaeda and ISIS.”'.

CONGRESSWOMAN
TULSI GABBARD
HAWAII'S 2ND DISTRICT

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Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard Returns From Syria with Renewed Calls: End Regime Change War in Syria Now

January 25, 2017 | Press Release

Washington, DC—Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (HI-02) returned to Washington, DC after a week-long visit to Damascus, Aleppo, and Beirut to see and hear firsthand the impact of the war in Syria directly from the Syrian people. She heard stories of suffering, pain, courage and hope from people all across the country. She met with refugees, Syrian opposition leaders who led protests in 2011, widows and family members of Syrians fighting alongside groups like al-Qaeda, as well as those fighting on the side of the government. The Congresswoman also met with Lebanon's newly-elected President Aoun and Prime Minister Hariri, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Elizabeth Richard, Syrian President Assad, Grand Mufti Hassoun, Archbishop Denys Antoine Chahda of Syrian Catholic Church of Aleppo, humanitarian workers, students, small business owners, and more.

Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard released the following statement upon her return:

"My visit to Syria has made it abundantly clear: Our counterproductive regime change war does not serve America's interest, and it certainly isn't in the interest of the Syrian people.

"As I visited with people from across the country, and heard heartbreaking stories of how this war has devastated their lives, I was asked, 'Why is the United States and its allies helping al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups try to take over Syria? Syria did not attack the United States. Al-Qaeda did.' I had no answer.

"I return to Washington, DC with even greater resolve to end our illegal war to overthrow the Syrian government. I call upon Congress and the new Administration to answer the pleas of the Syrian people immediately and support the Stop Arming Terrorists Act. We must stop directly and indirectly supporting terrorists—directly by providing weapons, training and logistical support to rebel groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIS; and indirectly through Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and Turkey, who, in turn, support these terrorist groups. We must end our war to overthrow the Syrian government and focus our attention on defeating al-Qaeda and ISIS.

Talking about the goal of her trip, Gabbard stated that she had been trying to convene the bowels of compassion of U.S. citizens towards the suffering of Syrians. She stressed that it

was important to end the war which has brought much suffering to Syrian families. The congresswoman also claimed that if politicians have talked about compassion for Syrians, peace had to be achieved by all means.

CNN journalist Jake Tapper asked Tulsi Gabbard whether she had any compunctions about meeting the Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad. The journalist also claimed that the Syrian president was allegedly responsible for murdering hundreds of thousands of Syrians and for the fate of millions of people who had had to leave their homes.

Replying to this question, Gabbard said that she hadn't planned the meeting initially but decided to use such a chance after she met with Syrians and could see the true state of things in the country. "It's important that if we profess to truly care about the Syrian people, about their suffering, then we've got to be able to meet with anyone that we need to if there is a possibility that we can achieve peace," the congresswoman said. "Whatever you think about President Assad, the fact is that he is the president of Syria," she said. "In order for any peace agreement, in order for any possibility of a viable peace agreement to occur there has to be a conversation with him."

Some of her thoughts are [available below](#):

- "We must stop directly and indirectly supporting terrorists—directly by providing weapons, training and logistical support to rebel groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIS; and indirectly through Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and Turkey, who, in turn, support these terrorist groups. We must end our war to overthrow the Syrian government and focus our attention on defeating al-Qaeda and ISIS."
- "From Iraq to Libya and now in Syria, the U.S. has waged wars of regime change, each resulting in unimaginable suffering, devastating loss of life, and the strengthening of groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS."
- "Originally, I had no intention of meeting with Assad, but when given the opportunity, I felt it was important to take it. I think we should be ready to meet with anyone if there's a chance it can help bring about an end to this war, which is causing the Syrian people so much suffering."
- "The U.S. must stop supporting terrorists who are destroying Syria and her people. The U.S. and other countries fueling this war must stop immediately. We must allow the Syrian people to try to recover from this terrible war."



INSIDE SYRIA: GABBARD & KUCINICH MEET ASSAD



Earlier this year, Rep. Tulsi Gabbard introduced the Stop Arming Terrorists Act (H.R.608), legislation that would prohibit U.S. government funds from being used to support al-Qaeda,

ISIS or other terrorist groups. In the same way that Congress passed the Boland Amendment to prohibit the funding and support to CIA backed-Nicaraguan Contras during the 1980's, this bill would stop CIA or other Federal government activities in places like Syria by ensuring U.S. funds are not used to support al-Qaeda, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, ISIS, or other terrorist groups working with them. It would also prohibit the Federal government from funding assistance to countries that are directly or indirectly supporting those terrorist groups. The bill achieves this by:

Making it illegal for any U.S. Federal government funds to be used to provide assistance covered in this bill to terrorists. The assistance covered includes weapons, munitions, weapons platforms, intelligence, logistics, training, and cash.

Making it illegal for the U.S. government to provide assistance covered in the bill to any nation that has given or continues to give such assistance to terrorists.

Requiring the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to determine the individual and groups that should be considered terrorists, for the purposes of this bill, by determining: (a) the individuals and groups that are associated with, affiliated with, adherents to or cooperating with al-Qaeda, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, or ISIS; (b) the countries that are providing assistance covered in this bill to those individuals or groups.

Requiring the DNI to review and update the list of countries and groups to which assistance is prohibited every six months, in consultation with the House Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees, as well as the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Requiring the DNI to brief Congress on the determinations.

Unfortunately, only few politicians agree with Gabbard. On the one hand, the future of Syria truly belongs to the Syrian citizens and it's only their right to decide in what country or with what legitimate power they would live on. On the other hand, the international coalition invaded the territory of a sovereign state and backs the opposition under the veil of tackling the Islamic State.

[B-roll footage from Aleppo and Damascus is available here](#)

Thus, even U.S. politicians acknowledge the inconsistency of the American foreign policy. They objectively accuse Washington of illegal military operations in Syria which have led to hundreds of thousands civilian casualties.

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