

US-Armed Jihadist in Syria Shoots Down Russian Plane, Kills Pilot

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

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[A U.S.-armed jihadist shot down, on February 3rd, in the Idlib area of Syria, a Russian Su-25 jet, and killed its pilot.](#)

In a leaked radio conversation, a “rebel” commander ordered his fighters to kill the pilot then burn his body.

At first, the “rebel” who did the shoot-down and killing was claimed to [be from the Al-Qaeda-supported Jaysh al-Nasser group](#), but subsequently [a different Al-Qaeda-supported group, Tahrir al-Sham, \(formerly called “Jabhat al-Nusra”\) officially confirmed that it had downed the warplane with a MANPAD](#) (a shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile). U.S. President Donald Trump had in October decided to supply MANPADs to the “rebels” in Syria. [Those shipments started to be received by Jaysh al-Nasser on October 8th.](#) In any case, this incident is the first time that Al Qaeda’s U.S.-backed affiliates in Syria have publicly claimed to have downed a Russian plane.

Later on February 3rd, Russia’s Tass news agency headlined [“Russian weapons deliver strikes on area from which Su-25 was shot down”](#), and reported that:

Massive high-precision weapons strikes have been delivered at targets in the area, from which a missile from the man-portable air-defense system (MANPADS) was launched to bring down the Russian Su-25 fighter jet, 30 militants of the Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist group (banned in Russia) have been killed, Russia’s Defense Ministry said on Saturday.

“A series of high-precision weapons strikes has been delivered on the area controlled by the Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist group, from which a MANPADS missile was launched at the Russian Su-25 jet,” the ministry said adding that “according to radio intercepts, more than 30 Jabhat al-Nusra militants were killed.”

So, now, Russia has officially announced that it has killed U.S.-armed “rebels” in Syria, and the U.S. will have to decide how to respond to that.

There is no legal basis for U.S. troops in Syria. These troops train and arm the “rebels” in Syria.

[The U.S. has an estimated 14 military bases in Syria.](#)

A major matter of speculation has been: when will Syria's President, Bashar al-Assad — who has repeatedly condemned the illegal military occupation of Syria by U.S. troops — simply order them to leave Syria. Such speculation doesn't exist regarding Russia's troops there, because Syria's Government had requested Russia's military assistance against the various jihadist groups that have infiltrated into Syria during the past six years.

[The U.S. has been arming Al Qaeda affiliates in Syria ever since 2012](#), but the decision to arm them with MANPADS was made by U.S. President Trump, not by his predecessor, Obama. Trump has simply escalated America's invasion and occupation of that country. He didn't start it. He's merely continuing Obama's war. Perhaps Trump thinks he's doing the job better than his predecessor did.

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Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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About the author:

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