

US Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard Blasts America's Support for Al-Qaeda in Syria, as Trump Threatens Further Military Action

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Terrorism](#),
[US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

US military veteran and congresswomen for Hawaii, Tulsi Gabbard, has [slammed](#) US foreign policy in Syria.

Arming al-Qaeda

On the 13th of September, Gabbard [told \[23:06\]](#) comedian and satirist Jimmy Dore:

"Since 2011 both overtly and covertly, the United States has been providing arms, intelligence, and equipment to fighters who are allied with, fighting along side, working with, al Qaeda in this regime change war.

So these very same terrorists who attacked us on 9/11. We've been supporting for years, as this ground force to fight in this regime change war that we have been quietly waging now for seven years."

These statements are strikingly up front, given the fact that these policies began under Democratic Party President Barack Obama.

On the 17th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Gabbard also [criticised](#) Trump's opposition the Syrian government's [plans to retake](#) Idlib, by way of tweet:

While President Trump & VP Pence give 9/11 speeches about how much they care about the victims of al-Qaeda's attack on our country, they are simultaneously acting as protectors of AQ in Syria/Idlib, threatening Russia and Syria that if they attack al-Qaeda, we will punish them.

— Tulsi Gabbard (@TulsiGabbard) [September 11, 2018](#)

It would be simplistic to see every anti-government rebel group in Syria as being [ideologically identical](#).

But the earliest evidence, [including from](#) western [establishment sources](#) that support

intervention in Syria, is that the dominant ideology among the majority of *the armed opposition groups* has long been fairly reactionary.

Supporting sectarianism and reactionary Islam

An US defense intelligence agency (DIA) report dated August 2012 put it [bluntly \[pdf, 3\]](#):

“A. Internally, events are taking a clear sectarian direction

B. The Salafist (sic), the Muslim Brotherhood, and [Al Qaeda in Iraq] are the major forces driving the insurgency in Syria.

C. The West, Gulf Countries, and Turkey support the Opposition; While Russia, China and Iran support the Regime.”

Operation Timber Sycamore

The New York Times (NYT) [reported](#), five years into the war, that the US had been arming and training Syrian rebels, in alliance with Gulf states like Saudi Arabia. Establishment economist and former member of the ‘Chicago Boys’ Jeffrey Sachs also [noted this](#) policy in an unusually candid discussion on MSNBC. Although the ‘paper of record’ implies that the US only started funneling weapons to rebels in 2013 (under a programme [code-named](#) Timber Sycamore) the evidence suggests otherwise.

Investigative journalist Gareth Porter [revealed last year how](#) the same 2012 DIA report shows that the US funneled large amounts of weapons, with incredibly destructive potential, into Syria via Libya as early as October 2011.

Porter describes how the CIA facilitated [at least](#):

“2,750 tons of arms bound ultimately for Syria from October 2011 through August 2012.”

Each container shipped [included](#):

“500 sniper rifles, 100 RPG (rocket propelled grenade launchers) along with 300 RPG rounds and 400 howitzers. Each arms shipment encompassed as many as ten shipping containers, it reported, each of which held about 48,000 pounds of cargo.”

Establishment way of thinking

Alexander Decina also [penned a](#) very informative article on this subject in 2017. Decina, who is a Research Associate with The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) [argued that](#) policymakers should stop searching for so called ‘moderate rebels’. The role of the CFR in shaping US policy is difficult to overstate.

Presidential candidate and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton once [told the](#) CFR:

“[I]t’s good to have an outpost of the Council right here down the street from

the State Department.

We get a lot of advice from the Council, so this will mean I won't have as far to go to be told what we should be doing and how we should think about the future."

With friends like these

Decina [writes](#):

"U.S.-backed and ostensibly moderate groups have even turned their fire on U.S. personnel. In late August, weeks after Free Syrian Army units first [fired on U.S. patrols](#) north of Manbij, U.S. troops [finally fired back](#). One of the groups [allegedly involved](#) in the latest incident, the Sultan Murad Division, had [received U.S. TOW missiles](#) as late as February 2016.

Beyond these problematic U.S.-armed groups, a number of others that Washington has refrained from arming yet declined to blacklist—thus leaving open the door for Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia to support them—are even more troublesome. These have included Ahrar al-Sham, Jaish al-Islam, and others that have fought al-Qaeda at times, most notably this past [July](#), but have also cooperated closely and formed robust [umbrella organizations](#) with the transnational jihadist group. Despite [insisting](#) upon their [moderate nature](#), these groups have certainly [committed their own atrocities](#)."

and:

"Basing groups' moderation on their waving the FSA flag, memorizing talking points about pluralism, and objecting to al-Qaeda has proven insufficient."



Turkish backed FSA rebels celebrate in Afrin City centre [after sacking it](#) and driving out tens of thousands of residents (Source: author)

He [suggests](#) policy makers instead:

“ought to think of the opposition in three categories: viable partners, irreconcilables, and unknowns.”

Decina’s recommendations could well have been the outlook of policy makers since the very beginning of the conflict.

Arming Al Qaeda

In 2015 US special forces (SF) veteran – turned journalist- [Jack Murphy](#) exposed dissension [among the ranks](#) of US troops engaged in covert ([and illegal](#)) military operations inside Syria.

[He writes:](#)

“Nobody believes in it. You’re like, ‘Fuck this,’” a former Green Beret says of America’s covert and clandestine programs to train and arm Syrian militias. “Everyone on the ground knows they are jihadis. No one on the ground believes in this mission or this effort, and they know they are just training the next generation of jihadis, so they are sabotaging it by saying, ‘Fuck it, who cares?’”

“The Syria covert action program is [CIA Director John] Brennan’s baby,” a former CIA officer told SOFREP. Weapons were provided to the FSA by the CIA ... after receiving permission from the White House via a presidential finding.

He [continues:](#)

The FSA made for a viable partner force for the CIA on the surface, as they were anti-regime, ostensibly having the same goal as the seventh floor at Langley.

... As early as 2013, FSA commanders were defecting with their entire units to join al-Nusra. There, they still retain the FSA monicker, but it is merely for show, to give the appearance of secularism so they can maintain access to weaponry provided by the CIA and Saudi intelligence services. The reality is that the FSA is little more than a cover for the al-Qaeda-affiliated al-Nusra.

In January this year, FSA rebels [allied with](#) the [invading](#) Turkish army to [ethnically cleanse](#) Afrin of its Syrian Kurdish population, and [remove the](#) Kurdish-led democratic government [established there](#). And today Idlib [is dominated](#) by an amalgamation of right-wing reactionary groups.

It is also worth noting that as early as January 2012 It was [reported that](#) British special forces and spies were working with FSA rebels in Libya, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Beware of the NATO powers arming rebels

The point is that Tulsi Gabbard’s critique of US foreign policy in Syria is not based on rumor or speculation but rather well-documented facts.

Whatever the crimes of the Syrian state, the British and American governments are not honest actors. Their actions in Syria have not only fueled the devastation in the country but

[completely violate](#) international law.

All this needs to be remembered as voices from the [US](#) and [UK](#) continue to threatened further military involvement in the country and as Turkey [steps up](#) its military presence in defence of [the rebels in Idlib](#) province.

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