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Yemeni Al-Qaeda Leader: We're Fighting Alongside US-Backed Forces

By Jason Ditz
May 2, 2017



While the Pentagon often presents the war in Yemen as being against al-Qaeda by way of trying to justify ever deeper direct US involvement, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) leader

Qasim al-Rimi was a bit more frank about the situation, noting AQAP forces regularly fight “alongside” the US-backed Sunni forces.

That’s an often unspoken reality of the Yemen War, of course, as Sunni tribal forces which are often presented as allies to the Saudis, supported by US-coordinated airstrikes, and “militias” loyal to the Saudi-backed government, regularly coordinate with AQAP in fighting against the Shi’ite Houthis.

This is something the Saudis have preferred not to make a public fact, as the war is already sectarian enough in nature without having direct al-Qaeda involvement, but policy was established very early in the war to attack the Shi’ites wherever they could be found, and to look the other way when AQAP ended up taking over territory in the process.

AQAP doesn’t see it as fighting alongside the US, of course, they see it as fighting with “fellow Muslims” against the Shi’ites,, who they consider heretics. With the Pentagon looking to get more deeply involved in a direct way in the war, however, they may find themselves with some uncomfortable allies.