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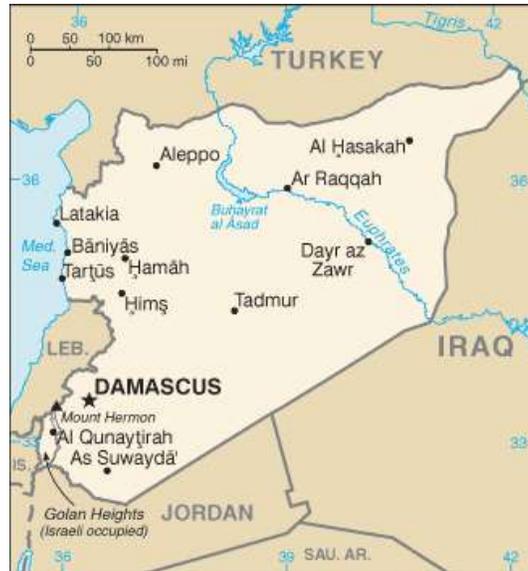
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<http://news.antiwar.com/2016/06/16/state-dept-officials-demand-us-attack-assad-instead-of-isis-in-syria/print/>

## State Dept Officials Demand US Attack Assad Instead of ISIS in Syria

By Jason Ditz  
June 16, 2016



Ongoing fighting between the CIA and the Pentagon over who the US is actually at war with in Syria appears to have dragged the US State Department in as well, with reports emerging that “dozens” of top State officials have signed a document “protesting” US policy in Syria for being focused on fighting ISIS.

Described as the “dissent channel cable,” the document appears to mirror the CIA’s own narrative, which is that in attacking ISIS the US is fighting the wrong war in Syria, and instead demands that the US shift focus entirely to militarily imposing regime change on the Syrian government.

Though the State Department document is still secret, it appears to simply echo the CIA’s supposition that ISIS can’t be defeated while Syria has a “weak” government, and that therefore destroying what’s left of Syria’s government might conceivably help.

Among the many problems with this strategy is that it is directly in contradiction to the strategy the US has publicly endorsed in recent months, and the one that they got through the UN Security Council, which is that the strategy to defeat ISIS is to unite the Syrian government and the secular rebels.

While talks to that effect haven’t gone well, having the US suddenly go off the reservation and launch yet another war inside Syria, this time against the Assad government, would likely cause a massive backlash, not just from Russia, which is backing the government, but from the rest of NATO, which has complained that the reason the talks haven’t worked is that the US has cut them out of the negotiation process and is just arguing with the Russians.

Secretary of State John Kerry was leading the charge for a war against Assad years ago, only to have it foiled by Syria agreeing to the demand to destroy all their chemical weapons. At this point, with Russia deeply involved in the war, attacking Assad is all but impossible, meaning the

State Department “protest” is mostly meaningless, and simply puts those officials on the record as not being happy with the losing war they’re already fighting.