



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on March 5, 2013

Sen. Rand Paul: Is Obama Administration Hiding Arms Trade to Jihadists?

As he did during last month's hearings on the Benghazi attacks, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) once again brought up the possibility of an Obama administration cover-up of the role played by the CIA in providing weapons to opposition forces in Syria.

During an interview Sunday night on [WABC Radio's "Aaron Klein Investigative Radio,"](#) Paul said, "There has been a lot made of the political cover up of President Obama's administration saying this (Benghazi attack) had something to do with a homemade film from some guy in Los Angeles. But in reality the question is, or the secondary quotation is, why would they do a cover up? What are they covering up?"



Continuing in that vein, Paul added:

And I have a feeling that it had something to do with the CIA annex. You know, a week before the ambassador was killed in Libya, a ship left Libya and docked in Turkey and it actually interviewed the captain of that ship who said there were arms on board and that he actually witnessed the rebels taking the arms and disputing over who got what. That there were grenade launchers; that there were significant arms being transferred.

Now that doesn't say the CIA was involved, but that begs the question (what) was the CIA annex there. The Libyan government is said not to have known that they were there. And is that the reason for the cover up? So there are a lot of unanswered questions.

Paul, in fact, tried to get answers to these questions from then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during the [Senate's investigation of the Benghazi raid](#) that left four people dead, including U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens.

Addressing Secretary Clinton, Paul asked directly, "Is the U. S. involved with any procuring of weapons, transfer of weapons, buying, selling, anyhow transferring weapons to Turkey out of Libya?"

Clinton demurred, claiming that she'd never heard about that allegation.

Undaunted, Paul continued, "It's been in news reports that ships have been leaving from Libya and that may have weapons, and what I'd like to know is the annex that was close by, were they involved with procuring, buying, selling, obtaining weapons, and were any of these weapons being transferred to other countries, any countries, Turkey included?"

Always the savvy politician, Clinton responded, "Well, Senator, you'll have to direct that question to the agency that ran the annex. I will see what information is available."



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“You’re saying you don’t know?” asked Paul.

“I do not know,” Clinton said. “I don’t have any information on that.”

All Clinton’s dodge and parry seems like old news now in light of her successor’s announcement that the United States was confident that the weapons being sent to Syria from its Middle Eastern neighbors would not “fall into the wrong hands.”

Speaking to reporters from Doha, Qatar, [Secretary of State John Kerry said](#) Tuesday, “We did discuss the question of the ability to try to guarantee (that the weapons) are going to the right people and to the moderate Syrian opposition coalition.”

Despite his assurances, Kerry did admit that keeping arms from reaching “[extremist parties](#)” in Syria would be impossible.

At [an earlier press conference held in Riyadh](#), Saudi Arabia, Kerry admitted, “There is no guarantee that one weapon or another might not at some point in time fall into the wrong hands.”

By all appearances, a similar supposedly U.S.-backed and managed gun running scheme resulted in arming the wrong people in Libya.

As [reported by the New York Times last December](#), the Obama administration “secretly gave its blessing to arms shipments to Libyan rebels from Qatar last year, but American officials later grew alarmed as evidence grew that Qatar was turning some of the weapons over to Islamic militants, according to United States officials and foreign diplomats.”

The story claims that the firearms and funds from Qatar “strengthened militant groups in Libya, allowing them to become a destabilizing force since the fall of the Qaddafi government.”

Regardless of that track record, the U.S. is accelerating its plan to add arms to the aid pipeline running from Washington to Damascus.

[On February 28, a New York Times story reported](#) that “The United States is also providing \$60 million to help the political wing of the Syrian anti-Assad coalition improve the delivery of basic services like sanitation and education in areas it has already wrested from the government’s control.” Last September, former Secretary Clinton pledged \$45 million in aid to the Syrian opposition.

Additionally, the *New York Times* piece revealed that sometime last year, the CIA opened a Syrian rebel training camp in Jordan.

The unnamed State Department official interviewed for the *New York Times* story refused to divulge any additional details on the activities carried on at the CIA’s rebel boot camp, but he assured the paper that CIA “had not given weapons or ammunition to the rebels.”

In light of such substantial financial, logistical, and intelligence support (not to mention the arms that will soon be shipped), it is crucial that Americans understand who’s receiving millions of their tax dollars.

A [Reuters article from last August](#) detailing a secret order signed by President Obama providing support to Syrian rebel forces opposing the regime of Bashar al-Assad reported that “Recent news reports from the region have suggested that the influence and numbers of Islamist militants, some of them connected to al Qaeda or its affiliates, have been growing among Assad’s opponents.”

Later, *The New American* [covered the same story](#), writing that “Western governments, brutal Sunni-



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Arab dictatorships, an assortment of terror groups including al-Qaeda, and other powerful interests have all been backing the uprising since long before violence even broke out last year.”

In a story covering the violence of the Syrian uprising, [the BBC added credibility to the accusations](#):

The al-Qaeda-styled group in Syria is Jabhat al-Nusra li-Ahl al-Sham (the Front for the Protection of the Syrian People).

Like other al-Qaeda affiliated groups, al-Nusra’s statements and videos are usually issued by its own media group, al-Manara al-Baida (the White Minaret) in Syria.

Al-Nusra has claimed responsibility for several attacks against the Syrian army, security and shabiha (state-sponsored thugs) since it announced its formation early this year.

Finally, under a headline reading “[Al-Qaida turns tide for rebels in battle for eastern Syria](#),” the Guardian (U.K.) reported:

They try to hide their presence. “Some people are worried about carrying the [black] flags,” said Abu Khuder. “They fear America will come and fight us. So we fight in secret. Why give Bashar and the west a pretext?” But their existence is common knowledge in Mohassen. Even passers-by joke with the men about car bombs and IEDs [improvised explosive devices].

According to Abu Khuder, his men are working closely with the military council that commands the Free Syrian Army brigades in the region. “We meet almost every day,” he said. “We have clear instructions from our [al-Qaida] leadership that if the FSA need our help we should give it. We help them with IEDs and car bombs. Our main talent is in the bombing operations.” Abu Khuder’s men had a lot of experience in bomb-making from Iraq and elsewhere, he added.

Given the presence of al-Qaeda in Syrian opposition leadership and the still-unanswered questions regarding the CIA’s role in funneling weapons to the murderous militants that attacked the Benghazi consulate, Senator Paul deserves praise for his effort to keep the heat on the Obama administration.

Photo of rebel fighter in Syria: AP Images

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