

UPDATE: Accusations Continue, But Still No Evidence of a Syrian Military Gas Attack



Children supposedly killed by gas canisters fired by Syrian army batteries. The proof remains elusive and many details point to a false flag event mounted by the rebels themselves with help from Western intel.

As accusations and posturing continue on the Western media, blaming the Syrian government for the crimes stemming from the Syrian civil war, the Obama administration solemnly and theatrically (it's all theater & p.r., after all) begins once again to rattle the sabre indicating the high probability of heavy American involvement—this time in the open since the US and Israel have been secretly involved in the toppling of the Assad regime for years, perhaps over a decade. Here's some dissenting voices and their arguments. —Eds

[what's left, edited by](#) By Stephen Gowans

[The US and its accomplices seeking UN cover for](#)

expanded war in the Middle East.

Two days after a possible chemical weapons attack in Syria we know that:

- The United States does not have “conclusive evidence that the (Syrian) government was behind poison-gas attacks.” [Wall Street Journal, 1]
- “Neither the United States nor European countries...have a ‘smoking gun’ proving that Mr. Assad’s troops used chemical weapons in the attack.” [New York Times, 2]
- The State Department doesn’t know “If these reports are true.” [New York Times, 3]
- The White House is trying to “ascertain the facts.” [Wall Street Journal, 4]

All the same, the absence of evidence hasn’t stopped the Pentagon “from updating target lists for possible airstrikes on a range of Syrian government and military installations”; [5] hasn’t stopped Britain and France from accusing the Syrian government of carrying out an atrocity; and hasn’t diminished the enthusiasm of newspaper editors for declaring Assad guilty beyond a shadow of a doubt.

“There is no doubt,” intoned the editors of one newspaper—with an omniscience denied to lesser mortals, including, it seems, US officials who are still trying “to ascertain the facts”—“that chemical weapons were used” and that Assad “committed the atrocity.” [6]

In a editorial, The Guardian (supposedly a liberal newspaper) avers that the Syrian military “is the only combatant with the capability to use chemical weapons on this scale.” Yet The Wall Street Journal’s Margaret Coker and Christopher Rhoads report that “Islamist rebel brigades have several times been reported to have gained control of stockpiles of chemicals, including sarin.” [7]

That might account for why the White House admitted two months

ago that while it believed chemical weapons had been used in Syria, it has no evidence to indicate “who was responsible for (their) dissemination.” [8]

And given that the US president claimed chemical weapons use by the Syrian military would be a red line, the rebels have a motivation to stage a sarin attack and blame it on government forces to bring the United States into the conflict more forcefully on their side. For the Syrian government, however, the calculus is entirely different. Using chemical weapons would simply hand the United States a pretext to more muscularly intervene in Syria’s internal affairs. Since this is decidedly against Damascus’s interests, we should be skeptical of any claim that the Syrian government is defying Obama’s red line.

Another reason for skepticism: Why use chemical weapons to produce the limited number of casualties that have been attributed to chemical agents use in Syria, when conventional weapons can just as easily produce casualties of the same magnitude—without proffering an excuse to Western countries to launch air strikes? Last month, the New York Times’ Rick Gladstone reported on a study which “found evidence of crudely manufactured sarin, a nerve agent, delivered via an unguided projectile with a crude explosive charge – not the sort of munitions stockpiled by the Syrian military.” [9]

So, no, the Syrian military is not the only combatant capable of using chemical weapons in Syria. But unlike the rebels, it has no motive to do so, and compelling reasons not to. That’s not to say that chemical weapons were used, rebel forces used them, and the Syrian military did not. The evidence is murky. But that’s the point. The rush to blame the Syrian military, and to update target lists for possible airstrikes, on the basis of no evidence, smacks of political motivation.

Clearly, the United States, France and Britain want public opinion on their side for stepped up intervention in Syria.

They've decided to declare Assad and the Syrian military guilty of using a weapon of mass destruction. But the conviction of guilt, as is evident through the statements of politicians and reporting of newspapers, rests on no sound evidentiary basis—indeed, on no evidence at all.

Stephen Gowans is one of Canada's leading left writers and political analysts. He is founding editor of What's Left.

1. Adam Entous, Julian E. Barnes and Inti Landauro, "U.S. weighs plans to punish Assad", The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2013

2 Mark Landler, Mark Mazzetti and Alissa J. Rubin, "Obama officials weigh response to Syria assault", The New York Times, August 22, 2013

3. Landler, Mazzetti and Rubin.

4. Entous, Barnes and Landauro.

5. Entous, Barnes and Landauro.

6. "Syria: chemical weapons with impunity", The Guardian, August 22, 2013.

7. Margaret Coker and Christopher Rhoads, "Chemical agents reflect brutal tactics in Syria", The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2013

8. Statement by Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes on Syrian Chemical Weapons Use, June 13, 2013,

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/13/statement-deputy-national-security-advisor-strategic-communications-ben->

9. Rick Gladstone, "Russia says study suggests Syria rebels used sarin", The New York Times, July 9, 2013

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[British MP: Israel provides terrorists in Syria with chemical weapons](#)

Syrian children are killed in a nerve gas attack by foreign-backed terrorists.



George Galloway

A British lawmaker says he believes the Israeli regime was the main culprit behind killing hundreds of civilians in Syria, because it provided terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda with chemical weapons they used against civilians.

“If there’s been any use of nerve gas, it’s the rebels that used it...If there has been use of chemical weapons, it was Al Qaeda who used the chemical weapons”, said Respect Party MP for Bradford West, George Galloway.

“Who gave Al Qaeda the chemical weapons? Here’s my theory: Israel gave them the chemical weapons”, Galloway MP added.

Meanwhile, media reports had it that Qatar’s Al Jazeera TV and Reuters news agency published the news of massacre in East Ghouta, Damascus “one day” before the massacre happened.

According to the reports tens of videos were uploaded before foreign-backed terrorists announced and accused the Syrian government of conducting chemical attacks on its own people. Those evidences show the terrorists massacred people, including women and children, then recorded and uploaded the scenes to deceive the world’s public opinion, but they did so hurriedly and gave themselves up.

The question here is why the Syrian government and its army should have committed such a heinous mass murder using chemical weapons when the United Nations inspectors are visiting the country to investigate the use of such weapons?

The foreign-backed terrorists and mercenaries hired by certain

regional Arab countries are making up those allegations against the popular government of President Bashar al Assad to invoke a foreign armed intervention in Syria the same as what they did in Libya.

Qatar's Al Jazeera TV published the news of the alleged chemical weapons attack by the Syrian army, citing unknown activists as its source.

A website funded by foreign-backed terrorists also uploaded videos of the alleged attacks and wrote that "Baath Regime used chemical weapons in East Ghouta, Damascus, Jobar, Ain Tarma, Zamalka, Western Ghouta, Muaddamiyah around 03: 30 am."

At the same time, one of the well-known pro- terrorists' Youtube account 'SHAMSNN' swiftly uploaded tens of videos between 03: 00 and 04: 00 am, 20 August. The same people behind all these scenarios accused the government of Syria and its army of carrying out chemical attacks on 21 August.

Now, even if the chemical attacks had happened at 03:30 on 20 August, it's not possible to film the scenes and upload tens of videos of these heinous crimes with the best quality pictures.

Therefore, all the evidence shows is that foreign-backed terrorists perpetrated the crimes, filmed and uploaded the scenes and went to their mouthpieces such as al Jazeera, al-Arabiya, Sky News and Reuters to accuse the Syrian government of a massacre the terrorists did.

Another best evidence of such brutality by the terrorists, who are regularly coming close to their end of life, is that they had gathered innocent civilians including women and children into certain places, killed them by nerve gas and filmed the brutal murder scenes, then they did what they were ordered to accuse the Syrian government.

Syrian Information Minister Omran al-Zoubi highlighted certain

countries' hostile stance towards his country telling the world that a media and political campaign of lies is being circulated by certain Arab and foreign media outlets including al-Jazeera, al-Arabiya, Sky News and others which are involved in the shedding of Syrian blood and supporting terrorism, with the objective of distracting the UN committee of inspectors of its mission to investigate which party to the conflict has used chemical weapons.

"The cries of terrorists and their calls for aid accompany the fact that the Armed Forces are advancing on the ground, and also accompany the fabricated campaign waged by some channels in desperate bid to imbue false morale in the armed terrorist groups," he said.

Omran al-Zoubi described the support by some Arabs and the so-called Arab League for these allegations as ridiculous, naïve and illogical.

SELECT COMMENT

A Perspective

Aug 24, 2013 1:15 PM

Syria made so much progress on the ground, defeating the foreign-backed rebels. One area to the next, the Syrian Army pushed them back. Such positive outcome and success against the Rebels, why would then the Syrian Army use Chemical Weapons? In several Speeches, Bashar Al-Assad, mentioned the possibility of an invading alliance from the West or the Arab spring based on their aggression. Then why would Assad risk using CW's? George Galloway is spot on, the nerve gas and other CW's is a rebel initiative with the help of the West and Israel to sway public opinion in aiding an invasion.

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August 21, 2013

[New Allegations of Chemical Weapons Use in Syria Based on US Political Motives, not Facts](#)

BY S. GOWANS



Deputy Press Secretary Josh Earnest: Lying for the empire. A rewarding career awaits.

The United States is once again, without evidence, accusing Syrian forces of using chemical weapons.

A senior White House official spoke of “strong indications” of “a chemical weapons attack—clearly by the (Syrian) government,” but added “we need to do our due diligence and get all the facts.” [1] In other words, we haven’t got the facts, but that won’t stand in the way of our making the accusation.

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The New York Times called the accusation into question with this headline: Images of Death in Syria, but No Proof of Chemical Attack. [2] The newspaper went on to say that according to experts, videos of the attack’s aftermath “did not prove the use of chemical weapons.” It added that,

Gwyn Winfield, editor of CBRNe World, a journal that covers unconventional weapons, said that the medics would most likely have been sickened by exposure to so many people dosed with chemical weapons—a phenomenon not seen in the videos. [3]

The Syrian military vehemently denies that it used chemical weapons. That, of course, doesn’t prove its innocence. The

Syrians could be trying to cover up to avoid a backlash. But if they're concerned about a backlash, why use the weapons at all?

It makes no sense to use gas, a weapon of mass destruction, to kill only as many people as can be killed readily with conventional weapons [4], while handing the United States, France and Britain—countries with histories of finding excuses to topple economically nationalist governments—a pretext to step up their intervention in Syria's internal affairs.

The White House's contention that Syrian forces are using chemical weapons but "keeping strikes small...possibly to avoid mass casualties that could spark a stronger international response" [5] doesn't add up. It's like accusing a country of using nuclear weapons, but keeping casualties low to avoid eliciting a punitive international response. If your objective is few casualties and no strong international response, why use weapons that produce neither?

The White House set the standard earlier this year for hurling baseless accusations in connection with Syria when it announced that it had concluded that the Syrian government had used chemical weapons, but admitted it had no proof.

On June 13, Deputy US National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes announced that: "Following a deliberative review, our intelligence community assesses that the Assad regime has used chemical weapons, including the nerve agent sarin, on a small scale against the opposition multiple times in the last year." [6]

Further down in the statement Rhodes admitted that the evidence the United States had collected "does not tell us how or where the individuals were exposed or *who was responsible* for the dissemination (emphasis added)." [7]

Read that again: The White House's evidence "does not tell us...who was responsible."

Contrast the rush to find Damascus guilty on the basis of no evidence with the White House's ridiculous refusal to conclude that the Egyptian military carried out a *coup d'etat*, despite overwhelming and conspicuous evidence it did. For Washington, it seems, facts are facts, and conclusions are conclusions, but they exist in separate, unconnected, worlds.

So why is the United States baselessly accusing the Syrian military of using chemical weapons? For the same reason it calls the Syrian government the Assad regime. Both serve to create a demon. And creating demons, as Michael Parenti has pointed out, gives you license to intervene. (8)

In a letter to a US Congressman, the United States' top military officer, General Martin Dempsey, acknowledged that the war in Syria is fuelled by "underlying and historic ethnic, religious and tribal issues"—a substantially different, and more realistic, take on the war than the simple-minded pro-democracy-rebels-fighting-against-dictatorship twaddle favored by the manufacturers of public opinion. Dempsey went on to say that the Pentagon could intervene in Syria to tip the balance in the war, but that there are no opposition groups "ready to promote their interests and ours." [9]

Since it's absurd to say that there are no opposition groups ready to promote their own interests (what group doesn't promote its own interests as its members understand them?) it can only be concluded that what Dempsey really meant was that there are no groups that see their interests as consonant with those of the United States, and until Washington can create such a group and the group has broad public support, the Pentagon will wait to intervene more forcefully.

Until then, we can expect that Washington will continue to demonize the Syrian government and its leader—even if it has to draw conclusions from thin air to do so.

Stephen Gowans is one of Canada's foremost leftist analysts of current events.

1. Sam Dagher, Farnaz Fassihi, and Adam Entous, "U.S. Suspects Syria Used Gas," The Wall Street Journal, August 21, 2013
2. Ben Hubbard and Hwaida Saad, "Images of Death in Syria, but No Proof of Chemical Attack," The New York Times, August 21, 2013
3. Hubbard and Saad.
4. Estimates range from "scores" to 130 to over 1,000 people killed in the latest incident, depending on the source.
5. Dagher, Fassihi and Entous.
6. Statement by Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes on Syrian Chemical Weapons Use, June 13, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/13/statement-deputy-national-security-advisor-strategic-communications-ben->
7. Rhodes.
8. Paul Weinberg, "The Face of Imperialism: An interview with Michael Parenti", rabble.ca, November 3, 2011, <http://rabble.ca/news/2011/11/face-imperialism-interview-michael-parenti>. Parenti said, "Once you convince the American public there are demons, you have the license to bomb their people."
9. Thom Shanker, "General Says Syrian Rebels Aren't Ready to Take Power," The New York Times, August 21, 2013

ADDENDUM

This lie is old. Our friends at "Forbidden Knowledge" sent us this dispatch.

Originally posted 11 months ago, "Syrian Girl" warned us about a recent photo she'd seen of gas masks that were definitely manufactured in the US, thus were definitely brought there by some agency that was not related to the Syrian government, as Syria imports its gas masks from

Russia.

She wondered if this portended an imminent False Flag chemical weapons attack, whereby NATO would deploy

chemical weapons against innocent civilians, via (largely non-Syrian) “insurgents” and then claim that those responsible were the Syrian military.

A major chemical attack allegedly occurred in Syria, the day before yesterday, killing hundreds in a Damascus

suburb. The Syrian rebels are blaming it on the Syrian Government and the Syrian Government is blaming on the rebels...
Video (about four and a half mins):

[Syrian Girl Warns of Chemical Weapons False Flag Months Ago](http://www.ForbiddenKnowledgeTV.com/page/24334.html)
<http://www.ForbiddenKnowledgeTV.com/page/24334.html>

– Alexandra