

Escalation of Tensions in Syria: One Month after the Chemical Attack in Khan Sheikhoun

Global Research News Hour Episode 179

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#), [USA](#)
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[Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War](#)
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"I will tell you, what happened yesterday is unacceptable to me,...And I will tell you, it's already happened that my attitude toward Syria and Assad has changed very much." – U.S. President Donald Trump (April 6, 2017) [1]

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On Thursday March 30th, US Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, [assured reporters](#) the Trump administration was no longer focused on removing the Syrian Head of State from power.

This policy stance shifted 180 degrees less than a week later following [an April 4th incident](#) involving dozens of deaths in Khan Sheikhoun attributed by Syrian opposition sources to a deliberate chemical weapons attack by the Assad government. [President Trump explained](#) that the killing of "innocent children, innocent babies — babies, little babies — with a chemical gas that is so lethal" inspired him to rethink his approach to dealing with the Syrian President, and ultimately to [fire 59 Tomahawk Missiles](#) on the air base from which the chemical gas attack was allegedly launched.

Far from being outraged at this violation of international law, mainstream media talking heads [erupted with applause](#) of the Commander-in-Chief's actions. Opinion polls finally [tipped in his favour](#), and even opposition politicians found occasion [to commend him](#) for his actions.

No comparable 'presidential' acts of moral indignation were in evidence a week later when over one hundred children evacuated from Syrian opposition-held villages were [murdered in cold blood by a terrorist bombing in Rashideen](#). In fact, with the exception of a few alternative news outlets, the incident has been virtually erased from public consciousness.

Likewise, dissident perspectives casting doubts about President Assad's deliberate bombing of his own citizens with chemical weapons, in spite of the lack of a rational motive ([on the eve of a major peace conference](#) in Brussels) [are mocked in the mainstream press](#).

Does the tragic deaths of 'beautiful babies' ring true in this instance as a pre-text for military action? Or was this a '[Wag the Dog](#)' maneuver to prop up an ongoing assault on the Trump presidency? These questions are at the core of this week's episode of the Global Research News Hour.

First up, we will hear from Ray McGovern, a representative of the group [Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity](#), about the problematic (lack of) intelligence informing the Trump administration's policy on reprisal for the chemical agent deaths. McGovern also looks at the coincidence between the president's stance on Syria, and the shake-up of his cabinet, beginning with the departure of his first National Security Advisor Mike Flynn.

We then hear an interview with Patrick Henningsen, recorded by Chris Cook of radio station CFUV 101.9 FM in Victoria for the program [Gorilla- Radio](#). Henningsen, who was on the ground in Syria in April, further elaborates on the problems with the April 4th chemical agents attack, talks about the Rashideen Massacre which he investigated hours after it happened, and the problematic media coverage of both incidents.

Finally, we hear never before heard audio from an interview with Mahdi Nazemroaya, recorded April 1st. This interview contextualizes the attacks by the [Turkish government on Kurdish positions in Syria and Iraq](#) near the end of April. Nazemroaya's analysis touches on Turkey's shifting allegiances in recent years and its evolving attitude toward Kurds.

Ray McGovern is a former U.S. Army Intelligence/Intelligence and past CIA analyst. He is a representative of the group 'Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity' which has published two reports critical of the Official 'Assad did it' line regarding Assad's use of chemical weapons.

Patrick Henningsen is a writer, investigative journalist, and filmmaker and founder of the news website [21stCentury Wire.com](#).

Mahdi Nazemroaya is a research associate with the [Centre for Research on Globalization](#) (CRG). He specializes on the Middle East and Central Asia. He has been a contributor and guest discussing the broader Middle East on numerous programs and international networks such as Al Jazeera, Press Tv, and Russia Today. His writings have been published in more than ten languages. He also writes for the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF) in Moscow, Russia.

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Notes:

1. Jeff Mason and Tom Perry (April 6, 2017), ‘Trump says chemical attack in Syria crossed many lines’, Reuters; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib-idUSKBN1770YU>

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