

# False Flag in Syria Sets Stage for Wider War

By [Tony Cartalucci](#)

Global Research, April 12, 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Military Militarization](#)  
and [WMD](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*The US threatened war within hours of an alleged chemical weapons attack taking place in Douma, northeast of Damascus.*

The US rush to conflict attempts to sidestep any meaningful investigation into the attack, fitting a larger pattern of Washington and its allies using baseless chemical weapon allegations for wars of aggression stretching back to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

US accusations and threats of war come at a pivotal moment in Syria's now 7 year conflict in which the Syrian government has finally liberated all territory around the capital from foreign-sponsored militants.

## Zero Evidence

To date, all supposed evidence comes from Western-funded militants and their auxiliaries including the US-European government-funded front, the so-called "Syria Civil Defense," better known as the "White Helmets." Unverified photographs and video of apparent victims have been the sole sources cited by the US.

The World Health Organization, in a recent statement attempting to bolster these accusations, claims that up to 500 patients appear to have been exposed to chemical poisoning, but would cite its "Health Cluster partners," the [Daily Beast would report](#).

However, according to WHO's own website, [these partners include Médecins Sans Frontières \(MSF\)](#), which in turn, according to MSF's own website [trains and supports the White Helmets](#). MSF has repeatedly admitted throughout the Syrian conflict that it does not have a presence on the ground in conflict areas and merely provides material support to groups that do.

The White Helmets have been repeatedly caught in the past fabricating evidence and staging scenes for propaganda value. In fact, all evidence suggests the entire purpose of the White Helmets is the production of propaganda.

This culminated in 2016 when the organization inadvertently revealed their theatrical methods [during a protest in multiple European cities](#). They applied red paint and flour to their bodies and posed as victims for European media outlets and local bystanders. The scenes were indistinguishable from daily clips uploaded by White Helmet members allegedly carrying out emergency services in militant-held territory in Syria.

Absent from virtually all of their videos are scenes of actual injuries – open wounds, crushed or severed limbs, burns etc. Videos also lack any context, and are often heavily edited.

## One Year Ago – Similar Lies

Previous allegations of the Khan Shaykhun chemical weapon attack the US cited in 2017 ahead of cruise missile strikes on Syria's Shayrat Airbase, were also baseless.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (OPCW-UN JIM) report on the alleged attack would admit that no investigators even visited the scene of the attack.

The UN [in a news article regarding the report](#) would even claim (emphasis added):

**Although it was too dangerous to visit Umm Hawh and Khan Shaykum,** the panel considered that sufficient information had been gathered to come to a solid conclusion.

Evidence instead consisted of interviews with alleged witnesses and physical evidence passed to investigators from possible suspects – since even the report itself admitted the possibility of the incident being staged to implicate the Syrian government. The report itself would also cite an absence of a chain of custody for evidence it received, diminishing their probative value.

Normalizing military aggression based on allegations of chemical attacks in which onsite investigations are not conducted produces the perfect conditions to stage incidents and rush to war.

The US rush to war without even awaiting an incomplete and questionable investigation as carried out by the OPCW-UN JIM in 2017 – indicates that the United States is not interested in, and possibly even attempting to obstruct the truth.

## Zero Motivation

Syria and Russia have been conducting security operations around Damascus with particular care, fully acknowledging the level of international scrutiny the Syrian conflict is under, including the conduct of the Syrian government and its allies.

Humanitarian corridors were opened to allow civilians to flee areas where fighting was taking place. Once defeated, remaining militants were even allowed to board buses and escape north to the Syrian-Turkish border.

Not only are the chemical weapons cited by the US [ineffective relative to the conventional weapons Syria and its allies have in their possession](#), the use of chemical weapons in military operations against an all but defeated enemy – considering the political costs of doing so – would be inexplicable.

The US government and the Western media have resorted to assigning essentially cartoon villain motivations to the Syrian government in an effort to explain why – on the verge of victory in Syria – the Syrian government would risk justifying a long sought after US military intervention against Damascus itself.

The US is already illegally operating in and around Syrian territory. This includes the occupation of Syrian territory by US troops east of the Euphrates River. The US has already

conducted multiple air strikes on Syrian government targets. In addition to the strike on Shayrat Airbase in 2017, US airpower has repeatedly attacked Syrian troops operating near US positions.

## The Grand Finale

Making it even more inexplicable for Syria's government to have deployed chemical weapons at this of all junctures – was the recent announcement by US President Donald Trump [of interest in withdrawing US troops from Syria](#).

While some interpreted his announcement as genuine, and suggest the likely staged chemical attack in Douma, Syria was an attempt to draw the US back in, a much more likely scenario is that President Trump simply lied to provide the US with plausible deniability ahead of a premeditated chemical weapons incident the US itself planned.

US policy papers have provided the framework for just such a scheme.

In the 2009 Brookings Institution policy paper titled, "[Which Path to Persia? Options for a New American Strategy Toward Iran](#)" (PDF), everything from supporting terrorists in a proxy war to staged provocations and full-scale war were planned in excruciating detail.

Included among the US policy think-tank's schemes was the description of a deception similar to the one likely playing out in Syria.

The paper would state (emphasis added):

...any military operation against Iran will likely be very unpopular around the world and require the proper international context—both to ensure the logistical support the operation would require and to minimize the blowback from it. The best way to minimize international opprobrium and maximize support (however, grudging or covert) **is to strike only when there is a widespread conviction that the Iranians were given but then rejected a superb offer**—one so good that only a regime determined to acquire nuclear weapons and acquire them for the wrong reasons would turn it down. **Under those circumstances, the United States (or Israel) could portray its operations as taken in sorrow, not anger, and at least some in the international community would conclude that the Iranians "brought it on themselves" by refusing a very good deal.**

For Syria, the "offer" was a US withdrawal and Damascus and its neighbors "given" the responsibility to humanely end the conflict and stabilize the region. The "rejection" inviting the US to intervene is the staged chemical attacks in Douma the US is now citing.

Regarding staged provocations, the Brookings paper mentions them as well, claiming (emphasis added):

**...it would be far more preferable if the United States could cite an Iranian provocation as justification for the airstrikes before launching them. Clearly, the more outrageous, the more deadly, and the more unprovoked the Iranian action, the better off the United States would be.** Of course, it would be very difficult for the United States to goad Iran into such a provocation without the rest of the world recognizing this game, which would then undermine it. (One method that would have some possibility of

success would be to ratchet up covert regime change efforts in the hope that Tehran would retaliate overtly, or even semi-overtly, which could then be portrayed as an unprovoked act of Iranian aggression.)

Nothing could be more “outrageous” or “deadly” than using chemical weapons on civilians.

“The Israel Approach”



In the immediate aftermath of the alleged chemical attack in Douma, Syria, Israel launched missiles into Syrian territory, striking Tiyas (T4) Military Airbase.

The same Brookings policy paper would also make specific mention of how this tactic would fit into a wider strategy of drawing a nation further into direct war with the United States itself.

The paper would state that (emphasis added):

**...the most salient advantage this option has over that of an American air campaign is the possibility that Israel alone would be blamed for the attack.** If this proves true, then the United States might not have to deal with Iranian retaliation or the diplomatic backlash that would accompany an American military operation against Iran. It could allow Washington to have its cake (delay Iran’s acquisition of a nuclear weapon) and eat it, too (avoid undermining many other U.S. regional diplomatic initiatives).

The report also states (emphasis added):

**It would presumably be easier to convince Israel to mount the attack than it would be to generate domestic political support for another war in the Middle East** (let alone the diplomatic support from a region that is extremely wary of new American military adventures).

The same report would also state (emphasis added):

However, as noted in the previous chapter, **the airstrikes themselves are really just the start of this policy.** Again, the Iranians would doubtless rebuild their nuclear sites. They would probably retaliate against Israel, and **they might retaliate against the United States, too (which might create a pretext for American airstrikes or even an invasion).**

Clearly these options laid out for Iran in 2009 have been repeatedly used instead against Syria. Among this most recent and unprecedented juncture, these ploys are being used again, in rapid succession and ultimately toward US-led regime change.

America’s Motivation

The US – since the end of the Cold War – has established a unipolar international order that serves the interests of US corporations and financial institutions and those of Washington’s allies. In a bid to preserve its primacy, the US has pursued a policy of encircling and

containing potential competitors – most notably Russia and China. It has done this through economic pressure, covert regime change, overt military invasion and occupation, or usually a combination of all three.

Reordering Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Central and Southeast Asia over the past two decades was meant to provide America with a united front of client states to wield against a reemerging Russia and a rising China before eventually folding both into its international order as well. However, these efforts have mostly failed. Technology has bridged gaps in economic and military power the US and Europe had previously exploited to achieve centuries of global hegemony over the global East and South.

The US now finds itself mired in a protracted conflict – so far unsuccessful in not only toppling the Syrian government, but also floundering on secondary objectives aimed at Balkanizing the country.

While a US withdrawal from Syria on its own terms will all but admit the end of American hegemony in the Middle East, should it remain and still fail – it will not only accelerate the emergence of a multipolar world order – but one in which the US finds itself an impotent pariah.

#### US Options



The US – clearly having failed to sell its case to the global public – may simply launch a limited strike as it did in 2017. The strikes will do little to change the trajectory of American foreign policy objectives and their ultimate failure in Syria. The operation – likely to kill Syrians and even possibly Russians and Iranians – will tentatively provide the US with an opportunity to save face in the wake of its recent and increasingly reckless bluster.

Syria and its allies will likely weather the attacks – if limited – as they have before, attempting to avoid the desired, wider confrontation the US seeks and letting the clock run out on Washington's failed proxy war. However, US policymakers may believe that the window of opportunity for the US to reassert itself as global hegemon has yet to close. It may calculate that its desire to carry out a direct military intervention in Syria to finally achieve regime change is greater than Russia and Iran's willingness to risk direct war with the US to stop it. The US may also be reckless enough to calculate that a limited confrontation directly with Russian assets in Syria would allow Washington to reassert itself in a much more dramatic way – with Russia not willing to escalate the conflict beyond the region. The US may even be willing to sacrifice US warships, aircraft, and ground bases during the ensuing conflict to achieve this goal – believing Russia will limit retaliation to the immediate theater of conflict. However the possibility of these incredibly risky options spiraling out of control and quickly involving Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, Lebanon, Iraq, and beyond would hopefully make such opinions all but inconceivable – even for increasingly desperate US policymakers.

Syria and its allies have attempted to provide the US with multiple, graceful exits from its failed proxy war. However, it is not the need to save face that now drives US persistence in Syria – it is the fact that withdrawing from Syria now will signify to the world an accelerated, irreversible decline of the American Empire.

\*

*Tony Cartalucci is a Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, especially for the online magazine [“New Eastern Outlook”](#) where this article was originally published.*

*All images in this article are from the author.*

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Tony Cartalucci](#), Global Research, 2018

---

**[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)**

**[Become a Member of Global Research](#)**

Articles by: [Tony Cartalucci](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)