

Obscuring the Details: A Panoramic Look at America's Case Against Syria

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The US federal government and the various agencies, media organizations, individuals, foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, lobbies, forces, and other entities that are tied to it have done everything in their power to obscure the details involving the chemical attacks that took place in Syria on August 21, 2013. The aim has been to justify the US-led foreign campaign that was launched against Syria in 2011 by making the Syrian government appear culpable of grievous crimes. The [chemical attack](#) on Ghouta has now come to represent the crux of the matter.

From the very start there was double-speaking coming from Washington and its cohorts about what happened in Ghouta. The Obama Administration and America's allies deliberately ignored that [chemical weapons](#) were used in Syria prior to August 21, 2013. They have pretended that the United Nations investigation team that had arrived in Syria when chemical weapons were used in Ghouta had just stumbled there coincidentally or with the purpose of «inspecting» the Syrian government's chemical weapon depots.

Ignoring the Original Mandate of the UN Investigators

In reality, the UN team that arrived in Syria in August was not a team of weapons inspectors. It was a team of «investigators.» Even more importantly, the Syrian government had invited the UN investigation team to Syria in March 2013. This was because the insurgents had launched chemical attacks on March 19, 2013. The US and its allies tried to blame Syria, but they were embarrassingly contradicted by Carla Del Ponte, one of the UN investigators responsible for Syria, that said all the evidence pointed to the insurgents and not the Syrian government. Although she backed her conclusion with facts, Del Ponte was dismissed by the US, and NATO even abnormally took the time to make a statement against her. Moreover, the insurgents were even caught trying to sneak sarin gas into Syria from Turkey by Turkish security forces in May 2013.

Because the insurgents were behind the chemical attacks in March 2013, Syria's government originally wanted the UN investigators to have the authority and mandate to officially assign blame on which party used the chemical weapons. The US, however, put all types of obstacles in place to prevent the UN from issuing a report that the US-supported insurgents were using chemical weapons. It was the US, Britain, and France that prevented an UN investigation that could assign responsibility for any chemical weapon attacks from taking place. Instead they wanted a politicized inspection team that would try to demonize Syria and write reports against Damascus. This led to a deadlock in the United Nations over the type of team that the UN would send to work in Syria. A settlement was eventually

reached. The US and its allies eventually reduced the mandate of the UN inspectors to one of only determining if chemical weapons were used.

The United Nation's team even spells out the fact that they had originally entered Syria to investigate the March 2013 chemical attacks all in their September 2013 report's Letter of Transmittal signed by Ake Sellstrom, the head of the UN mission, Scott Cairns, the head of the OPCW (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) component of the UN mission, and Maurizio Barbeschi, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) component of the UN mission. The UN team states the following on the report's third page: «Having arrived in the Syrian Arab Republic on 18 August 2013, we were in Damascus on the 21 August preparing to conduct on-site inspections in connection with our investigation into the allegations concerning the use of chemical weapons in Khan al-Asal and in Sheik Maqsood and Saraqueb. Based on several reports of allegations on the use of chemical weapons in the Ghouta area of Damascus on 21 August 2013, you instructed us to focus our investigation efforts on the Ghouta allegations. We, therefore, proceeded to conduct on-site inspections in Moadamiyah in West Ghouta and Ein Tarma and Zamalka in East Ghouta».

Cooked US Intelligence and Implausible White House Stories

The narrative that the US government and its allies present about Ghouta is contradictory to logic and highly implausible. Added to the fact that the US has a track record of lying to create pretexts for aggression, Washington's claims should be heavily scrutinized. So should the same group of non-governmental organizations that have consistently backed American wars and conjured instant reports to justify US foreign policy and war.

[President Obama](#) and John Kerry claimed that the Syrian military used chemical weapons while it was advancing militarily in Ghouta. This is contrary to any procedure that would be followed by an organized military force. An advancing military would not gas an area when it was entering it with its forces. Obama and Kerry might as well have claimed that the Syrian military had decided to reduce the number of its own troops by killing them.

Furthermore, there was no tactical need to use chemical weapons in Ghouta whatsoever. Ghouta did not have a large amount of anti-government fighters. Nor was Ghouta under the full control of the insurgents. Despite being in worse situations, the Syrian military never bothered using chemical weapons earlier in the conflict when things were dire for the Syrian government.

On the contrary, using chemical weapons would be a self-defeating and suicidal move by the Syrian government. Why would the Syrian government use chemical weapons when the combined UN team of OPCW and WHO investigators arrived in Syria to investigate the use of chemical attacks? Moreover, why would the Syrian military decide to use chemical weapons unnecessarily?

No evidence has been provided that the Syrian government was responsible for the chemical attack on Ghouta. On the contrary the US has only made claims and a series of contradictory statements. Using cooked Israeli evidence, Washington has claimed that the orders to use chemical weapons were intercepted, but has failed to provide the transcripts or to give any names of Syrian officials. In its own intelligence report the US government has also said that it knew in advance that the chemical attacks were going to happen. If the US government is to be believed, this would mean that the Obama Administration did not mention it and did nothing to prevent the use of chemical weapons from happening.

It turns out that the US government was given some type of advanced warning by the Iranian government about a chemical attack in Syria. The warning, however, was that the insurgents planned on using chemical weapons. This has been matched by statements from insurgents themselves that Saudi Arabia had provided the chemical weapons to the insurgents. Russian officials have also assessed that the chemical attacks in Ghouta were part of an intelligence operation conducted by Saudi Arabia.

Chemical Weapon Hypocrisy

It is not true either that the Syrian government lied about not having chemical weapons. Even though it was widely known, Damascus never denied or acknowledged that it had chemical weapons. The Syrian government always strategically applied a policy of deliberate ambiguity that neither confirmed nor denied that Syria had chemical weapons in its military arsenal. Anyhow, there was acknowledgement from Syrian officials that Syria possessed chemical weapons when Syrian officials said that they were worried that the insurgents would try to get their hands on the chemical weapon stocks inside Syria or use chemical weapons to frame the government.

Aside from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert admitting that Israel has nuclear weapons in 2006, the deliberate ambiguity of Syria is the same policy that [Israel](#) has tried to apply in regards to its biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Despite the same policy being used by both Damascus and Tel Aviv, the US government and media apply double standards by falsely accusing Syria of lying about its possession of chemical weapons while they say nothing about Israel. Instead both the US government and media refuse to admit or recognize the fact that Syria was applying a policy of ambiguity.

President Obama even had the audacity to call the August 2013 use of chemical weapons in Syria the worst chemical weapon attack of the 21st Century. He ignored the use of chemical weapons against Iraqi combatants and civilians in Fallujah and Israeli chemical weapon attacks on Lebanon and Gaza. As heinous a crime as the chemical attacks on Ghouta were, more Iraqis were killed by the United States in its chemical attacks on Fallujah.

Even looking back at the last century, it was the United States and its British allies that armed Saddam Hussein with chemical weapons by knowingly providing him the materials and technology needed to gas both the Iraqi Kurds and Iran. Not once did the US condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi government in the 1980s while Baghdad was aligned with Washington. The British Defence Ministry was even directly helping Saddam Hussein's government develop his chemical and biological weapons in Iraq while the Pentagon helped the Iraqis organize their [attacks on Iran](#) and sent US military officers to examine the success of Iraqi chemical warfare against the Iranians. Instead the US deliberately went out of its way to blame the Iranian victims of being responsible for the chemical weapon attacks.

Making Self-Serving Interpretations of the UN Report

It is clear from the radically different interpretations that the US and Russia have about the Final Communiqué of the Action Group for Syria that was made in Geneva on September 30, 2012 that Washington deliberately makes self-serving interpretations of anything from its agreements to international law and multilateral deals. While the consensus that was reached in the final communiqué at Geneva in 2012 called for a peaceful and democratic solution to the conflict in Syria, the US and its allies deliberately choose to pretend that their

agenda was adopted by Russia, China, and the rest of the world. By this Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the league of foreign ministers supporting regime change in Damascus falsely claimed the Action Group for Syria called for a transitional government that would not include any role for President Bashar Al-Assad.

The case has been the same in regards to the UN team's September 2013 report about the nature of the chemical weapon attacks in Ghouta. The initial UN report has been interpreted in self-serving ways by the US and its cohorts. The fact that an old Soviet-manufactured projectile was used on August 21 is being highlighted as an indicator of the Syrian government's guilt, because the Syrian military uses Soviet-made and Russian-made weapons.

Just because a Soviet weapon was used does not mean that the Syrian military was behind the attack. Old Soviet weapons are in wide use, including by the insurgents in Syria. Even more importantly, the Soviet-made BM-14 series projectile is not in use in the Syrian military's arsenal. Moreover, the Soviet Union never exported this model to Syria nor did Soviet officials ever supply any sarin gas warheads to any country. It has also been reported that the three Arab countries that received this projectile were Egypt, South Yemen, and Libya.

Human Rights Watch (HRW), which has been actively lobbying for a war against Syria, has even produced a map to indict the Syrian government as being responsible for the attack. The map, which is featured in a report published by HRW in September 2013, points the finger at 104 Brigade of the Syrian Republic Guard for the chemical attacks. This has been refuted, because only special military units can use or launch chemical weapons in Syria and 104 Brigade is not one of them. Furthermore, there is chain of command that needs to be followed; chemical weapons can only be used with a high-level clearance and approval from Syria's upper echelons.

The US government has fallaciously tried to equate the UN's verification that sarin gas was used as some type of evidence that the Syrian government was responsible. While sarin samples have been verified by the United Nations, the authenticity of the evidence that has been provided by the US that the Syrian government is guilty needs to be examined. The US-supported insurgent's videos that were appraised as real by US intelligence and presented to the world by the Obama Administration as evidence have not been verified. On the contrary, these videos have dubious scenes where the same bodies reappear in different locations.

From Strategic Deterrence to Liability

The Obama Administration has deliberately hidden behind the word «norm» and its plural («norms») as a means of trying to substitute it for an aura and façade of legality when it claims that Syria is in violation of international norms. Norms are expected patterns of behavior and not compulsory laws that must be enforced by the international community. Moreover, if the US wanted to follow international law it would obey what the Chemical Weapons Convention stipulates clearly, which says that when there is a violation all the signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention must gather and then collectively decide what to do. There is no international law in place that allows the United States to unilaterally decide what to do or present itself as the enforcer of international agreements.

Syria was never in violation of international law through its position of chemical weapons

either. This is because, like Egypt, Syria never signed the Chemical Weapons Convention. The reason behind this decision was that both the Egyptian and Syrian militaries decided to hold on to their chemical arms as strategic deterrents against Israel's biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Although Israel became a signatory state to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, just like Myanmar, the Israelis did not ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. This is why Syria chose not to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention until after the chemical attack in Ghouta.

It became clear to the Syrian government in 2013 that the liability of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal outweighed its use as a strategic deterrent. As a result of the Syrian conflict, Syria's chemical weapons have become less likely to prevent a foreign attack or invasion of Syria. The liability has become too great and as a result the Syrian government decided to give them up. This has pleased both the US and Israel, because it has given them a strategic advantage over Syria and its regional allies.

Now that Damascus has joined the Chemical Weapons Convention it should be noted that the Syrian government is not responsible for destroying its chemical weapons stock either under the agreement it has with the OPCW. It is the OPCW and the United Nations that are the responsible parties. The responsibility of Syria is to identify and declare all of its chemical weapons stock and to provide the OPCW access to them for destruction. It is possibly that the US may also try to obscure these facts as well to manipulate the situation.

America's Goal is to Crush the Syrian Nation in an Indirect War of Attrition

The US government does not care about making the world a safer place. Syria's chemical weapons have been a smokescreen all along. Speaking to Perviy Kanal (Channel One/First Channel), Russia's largest network, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov let it be publicly known that the US was threatening to end working with the OPCW and to sabotage the agreement to destroy Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons if the Russians refused to give political compensations to the US. What Washington has wanted in return for an agreement to destroy Syria's chemical weapons is that Russia and China allow a United Nations Security Council resolution that authorizes the use of force to be passed.

Before the chemical attacks on Ghouta, the anti-government forces in Syria were suffering one major defeat after another at the hands of the Syrian military. As the internal pressure against Syria began declining, the external pressure began increasing. The Israeli aerial assaults on Syria and the Turkish border incidents and threats were meant to bring the Syrian military's winning momentum to an end. These Israeli and Turkish moves were meant to change the balance of power and direction of battle momentum in Syria. Their aim was to do this by psychologically disorienting and weakening the Syrian military and government with crippling doses of fear while motivating and encouraging the anti-government militias to intensify their attacks.

The psychological attempts to bolster the anti-government militias against the Syrian military and its supporters failed. The Syrian military's victories continued throughout 2013. The anti-government militia incursions into Latakia were blocked and their offensive surge from the Jordanian border was beaten by the Syrian military. Hezbollah also intervened to help purge the anti-government forces from the Lebanese-Syrian borders.

This has brought the US and its allies closer and closer into direct confrontation, in some form or other, instead of indirectly attacking Syria via their proxies. The US government,

however, prefers to secure its objectives without using its own resources or exerting itself in any costly ventures. This is why Washington's initial option has been to threaten and to give the perception of being ready to use military force before actually using military force.

The US strategy in Syria is that of an indirect war of attrition. America loses the conflict in Syria if either combating side in Syria wins. The US government and Israel want the fighting in Syria to continue as long as possible between all combating sides. Washington and Tel Aviv do not want to see anyone coming out totally victorious. This is even acknowledged by US analysts with high-level ties to the Pentagon and US government. This objective is candidly outlined in an article written on August 24, 2013 by Edward N. Luttwak, a military analyst and senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in the New York Times.

The real target of the US-led campaign in Syria is the Syrian nation and not merely the government in Damascus. The government could matter less. The US and Israeli objectives in Syria are to crush Syria as a nation-state, even if their own insurgent allies or Syrian National Coalition clients win and form the government in Damascus.

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