

# Syria in Perspective: Fabricating Incidents to Incriminate The Syrian Government. Peter Ford

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By [Peter Ford](#)

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[War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*Statement by Peter Ford, British Ambassador to Syria, 2003-6, Representative of the Commissioner General of UNRWA, 2006-14*

*Peter Ford will also be speaking at Imperialism on trial, a series of speaking events being held in four cities in the United Kingdom (July 2018). For details see below at foot of article.*

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The objective of this meeting is to show Syria in perspective. That is, Syria as she really is after eight years of war, not as she is almost universally portrayed in the West.

A brave stand by the Commission of Inquiry on Syria over alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma

I shall look at the broad picture, but I want to zero in by dealing with the report presented yesterday by the Commission on Syria.

I am not going to endorse that report but I want to begin by congratulating the Commission for standing firm and refusing to make premature pronouncements about the alleged use of prohibited weapons in Douma.

In doing so the Commission obviously angered those in the US administration and elsewhere who are impatient to see the West bombing its way to regime change in Syria. Hence the petulant leaks to the New York Times of a rejected earlier draft of the Commission report, and hysterical accusations against the Commission.

The body which actually has prime responsibility for determining what occurred or did not occur in Douma is the OPCW. Its investigations are not yet complete. Perhaps worried that the outcome might not be what Washington wants, the US administration had clearly been pinning high hopes on the Commission for producing a report which would suit the administration's purpose of retrospectively justifying the illegal US/UK/French bombing of Syria in April – and more importantly, of conditioning opinion for the next, bigger aggression.

Conditioning Western opinion for the next aggression

Make no mistake, conditioning opinion for the next Western air strikes is crucial for the

coming phase of the Syria conflict.

Imagine that today you are a leader of one of the armed groups, in Deraa, say. You have seen how gullible Western governments and media are.

You have seen how easy it is to fabricate incidents to incriminate the Syrian government. You don't even need to stage a false flag operation, that is one where you yourself use chemical weapons in order to pin the blame on Assad. You did that in 2013 only the former Commissioner, Carla Del Ponte, to veer off message by stating that there was strong and concrete evidence that the rebels had stocks of sarin and had used it.

The UN hierarchy intervened quickly to row back on what Carla Del Ponte had blurted out. So you, the jihadi leader, felt confident in staging more false flag incidents, as with the Khan Sheykhoun incident in April 2017. You knew that the OPCW inspectors would not actually visit the site, because your jihadi forces made sure it was unsafe. You knew that that – incredible as it may seem – would not stand in the way of the inspectors, in violation of their own protocols, accepting as genuine ground samples, photographs and other evidence provided by your auxiliaries, the White Helmets. You knew the inspectors would not demand biological samples.

You were worried when some of your coached witnesses in an excess of zeal presented themselves to hospitals too early and were logged as being treated even before Assad's planes had left Sheyrat air base. The inspectors, however, relegated this killer fact to an appendix to their report. It was of course ignored.

Douma was a bigger challenge because you, the jihadi leader, left it so late that the inspectors were actually able to visit the site. But you were confident that your Western paymasters would bomb Assad without waiting for the investigation. And then when the investigation, delayed by the bombing, was finally about to get under way it was a simple matter to engineer more delay and deterioration of evidence by having your sleeper cells left behind fire a few shots. You knew the West would blame Russia and Assad. You knew also that even though the Russians found the people seen in the key video of the incident and had them recount here in Europe the true story of what happened, the Western media would prefer to believe you, the accomplice of Al Qaida.

Pentagon acting as Al Qaida air wing

You really cannot believe your luck. You have lost the war but here is the Pentagon willing to act as Al Qaida's air wing as long as you just provide them with a credible staged incident.

To get the US, UK and France to go to war, a lower standard of evidence is needed than it takes to get a conviction for a parking ticket.

After Douma Western leaders swore that next time the gloves would be off, and reports emerged that Plan A for Douma had been to target Assad himself and his command centres, though the Russians nixed that. So what do you, the jihadi commander, do now? Well obviously you start planning the next fake attack. You would be a fool not to.

Thus , my friends, a repeat of Douma is fated to occur. Unless, that is, sufficient doubt emerges about the Douma charade, the Douma hoax, to give Western governments pause in assuming that their public opinions will swallow a repeat dose and allow them to risk a much more serious confrontation with Russia and Iran.

Against the background of that likely scenario, we see what a crucial service the Commission has performed by refusing to join in the conditioning of opinion by pronouncing on Douma.

Siege warfare is not the unique vice of the Syrian government

Enough praise for the Commission. Now for some caveats

I quote:

‘we visited 44 sites and interviewed 112 civilian residents’

‘[they] launched air strikes on buildings full of civilians using wide area effect munitions...’

‘we found no information indicating that fighters were present’

‘they used unguided mortars and unguided artillery’

‘there is strong evidence that the attacks violated international law’

‘they fired projectiles above houses... photos showed burning elements coming into contact with civilian buildings’.

‘people hiding in basements were terrified’ ‘hundreds were killed and thousands injured’

Horrendous, yes? Shocking, yes?



These are quotes not from the Commission report but from the [Amnesty International report](#) on the siege of Raqqa by the Coalition. They put into its right context the Commission’s report on the siege of Douma.

But while the Commission apparently want to indict Syrian leaders for war crimes, those who conducted the siege of Raqqa, reported on by the Commission in an earlier report, are just gently admonished for not taking enough precautions.

It is remarkable that the Commission have ignored the Amnesty International report in their latest offering, even though Amnesty International called for international investigation and action.

Crimes of aggression

Other issues are also ignored.

The Commission is mandated to investigate not only human rights law but also ‘abuses and violations of international law (HRC 21/26)’. The crime of aggression is such a violation, indictable under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The Commission cannot trespass on the territory of the OPCW, as it has done, damagingly, in earlier reports, producing the endlessly cited factoid that there have been 34 chemical weapons attacks since 2013, while on the other hand timidly ignoring issues arising under

the purview of the Rome Statute.

The unprovoked attacks by the US, UK and France on Syria following the liberation of Douma are barely given a mention in the latest report.

Other acts of illegality are ignored.

Is it not a violation of international law to give immense military, financial and propaganda support to armed groups operating in the territory of a member state of the UN?

Is it not a violation to establish without permission military bases on the territory of a member state? The US has several thousand troops in Syria, and does not even attempt to justify their presence in terms of international law. British forces are present too, and the British government ludicrously tries to justify their presence on the far fetched grounds that they are protecting Iraq against ISIS.

Is it not a violation to use military force to prevent the forces or allied forces of a member state from taking control of state oil assets, and to kill scores if not hundreds in the process, as occurred in the vicinity of Deir Ez Zor?

Is it not a violation of international law to occupy a pocket of a state's territory, 55 kilometres deep, as at Al Tanf on Syria's border with Iraq, and shamelessly proclaim a readiness to use military force to prevent that state's forces' from entering in order to root out jihadis being rebadged, equipped and trained behind American shields?

Is it not a violation of international law to invade Syrian territory as Turkey has done, and to establish a de facto occupation authority?

Is it not a violation of international law to dispose of part of a state's territory as Turkey and the US have purported to do over the district of Manbij, and to connive at keeping out the forces of the lawful government?

Is it not a violation to bomb alleged sites of chemical weapons which had been recently inspected by OPCW inspectors and found to give no grounds for concern?

Is it not a violation to direct unilateral coercive measures against a state without any international mandate to do so?

And finally, is it not a breach of international law for Israel to launch more than a hundred unprovoked bombing raids on Syria, some hundreds of kilometres away from Israel?

The Commission pass over in embarrassed silence all these very serious violations.

Forced displacement

The Commission's report makes much of alleged forced displacement. This is a classic example of misleading framing.

What the Syrian government has done in terms of negotiating terms for local surrenders could equally be framed as humane treatment of a vanquished foe, offering them a choice between staying in the locality and accepting government jurisdiction, or leaving with their families for another destination controlled by their fellow insurgents. So excellent was this

choice that the Coalition used the same procedure at the end of the siege of Raqqa, allowing thousands of ISIS fighters to escape.

I am afraid that on this count the Commission have been dupes of opposition propaganda.

Two possible futures for Syria

I shall conclude by taking a forward look at where Syria is heading.

There are basically two possible futures for Syria.

Spoiler strategy of the West

First there is the future as the Western powers are trying to shape it.

At the moment the US and its satellites realise that Asad has the military upper hand and will be hard to dislodge just by military means. They have therefore a multi-pronged spoiler strategy:

Prevent Asad regaining control of the North East, with its important oil and gas assets.

Try to hamper trade and communications across the border with Iraq, by actions which include refraining from crushing ISIS in its remaining redoubts, from where it can remain a thorn in the Syrian government's side

Use sanctions to keep the Syrian economy weak

Prevent international aid for reconstruction from reaching Syria

Keep Syria depopulated by discouraging return of refugees to Syria

Use the Geneva negotiations and the fiction of 'transition' to claw back in the negotiating chamber what has been lost on the battlefield

Weaken Syria militarily by securing with Israeli assistance withdrawal of Iran and its allies

Stand by ready to cripple government forces using the pretext of a chemical weapon attack

This future has no vision for what might occur if the strategy succeeds. No conception of what would fill the void if Asad was toppled. As with Iraq, the West wreaks destruction and hopes for the best.

A military solution

The second future is this:

The gradual recovery of the entirety of Syrian territory under the present government. A major step forward is being made currently in the South. That will leave just the North and North East. Talks are already under way with the Kurds. The status quo in these areas is unsustainable and the Kurds know it. The Kurds need Syrian government protection against Turkey. Some changes in the constitution will bring the Kurds on board.

The Idlib campaign to bring that area under the government control may be brutal but can

only have one outcome.

Essentially what we shall see is a military solution. With the recovery of the South the Syrian government will control areas where 80% of Syrians live. All the pious talk about there only possibly being a political solution is just that, pious talk. Essentially what we shall see is a return to the status quo ante, with some modification for the Kurds.

This is the perspective I think is the most likely to prevail for Syria, and the one desired by most, war weary Syrians. The war will have been waged on Syria, primarily from outside, for nothing.

Western powers, get used to it.

Stop trying to delay the inevitable and prolonging the agony.

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Featuring Peter Ford (former UK Ambassador to Syria and Bahrain), Eva Bartlett (investigative journalist), Professor Peter Kuznick (Co-Author with Oliver Stone, Untold History of the United States), Adam Garrie, (Director, Eurasia Future), Ken Livingstone (Former Mayor of London), Rev Andrew Ashdown (Doctoral Research Student in 'Christian-Muslim relations in Syria'), Catherine Shakdown (geopolitical analyst and writer) and more!

This series of events being held in four cities in the United Kingdom offers an alternative narrative on global politics and war, to that presented by the mainstream media.

Imperialism on Trial – July 2018

UK Tour Dates:

London – Tuesday July 10

Bloomsbury Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Ave.

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM BST [Doors open at 6:15]

Eva Bartlett, Peter Kuznick, Peter Ford, Adam Garrie, Rev Andrew Ashdown

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47772122705?aff=es2>

London – Wednesday July 11

Bloomsbury Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Ave.

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM BST [Doors open at 6:15]

Eva Bartlett, Peter Kuznick, Peter Ford, Neil Clark, Adam Garrie

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47281318697>

Birmingham – Thursday July 12

Quaker Meeting House

40 Bull Street

6:45 – 9:15 BST [Doors open at 6:15]

Eva Bartlett, Peter Kuznick, Ken Livingstone, Peter Ford, Catherine Shakdam

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47282457102>

Liverpool – Sunday July 15

Liverpool Irish Centre

6 Boundary Lane

7:00-10:30PM BST [Doors open at 6:30]

Eva Bartlett, Peter Ford, Peter Kuznick, Dan Glazebrook, Gerry Maclochlainn.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-ontrial-tickets-47282789095>

Manchester – Monday July 16

Manchester Irish Centre

1 Irish Town Way

7:00 – 10:30PM BST [Doors open at 6:30]

Eva Bartlett, Dan Glazebrook, Gerry Maclochlainn, Michael Pike, Rev Andrew Ashdown

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47283231418>

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