

The Syria Chemical Weapons Saga: The Staging of a US-NATO Sponsored Humanitarian Disaster

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Author's Note and Update

In the light of recent developments and accusations directed against the Syrian government, it is important once more to set the record straight: the US supported rebels possess chemical weapons.

The following article first published in December 2012 [scroll down] documents how the Pentagon not only provided chemical weapons to Al Nusra, an affiliated Al Qaeda terrorist organization, but also provided training to the rebels in the use of these weapons.

While Washington continues to point its finger at president Bashar al Assad, a United Nations independent commission of inquiry confirmed as early as May 2013 that the rebels rather than the government have chemical weapons in their possession and were using sarin nerve gas against the civilian population:

U.N. human rights investigators have gathered testimony from casualties of Syria's civil war and medical staff indicating that rebel forces have used the nerve agent sarin, one of the lead investigators said on Sunday.

The United Nations independent commission of inquiry on Syria has not yet seen evidence of government forces having used chemical weapons, which are banned under international law, said commission member Carla Del Ponte.

The Geneva-based inquiry into war crimes and other human rights violations is separate from an investigation of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria instigated by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, which has since stalled [discredited]. See "[U.N. has testimony that Syrian rebels used sarin gas: investigator](#)," Chicago Tribune, May, 5 2013, emphasis added)

Ironically, when the chemical weapons pretext was first launched by the Pentagon in August 2012, the accusations were not directed against President Bashar al Assad to the effect that he was underhandedly conniving to use WMD against Syrian civilians. Quite the opposite. According to the Pentagon, the operation was to ensure that Syria's WMDs, which allegedly had been "left unguarded" in military bunkers around the country would not fall in the hands of opposition jihadist rebels who are fighting government forces:

Pentagon planners are more focused on protecting or destroying any Syrian stockpiles that are left unguarded and at risk [of] falling into the hands of rebel fighters or militias

aligned with Al Qaeda, Hezbollah or other militant groups. ([U.S. has plans in place to secure Syria chemical arms – latimes.com](#), August 22, 2012

What the Pentagon was saying in August 2012, is that these WMD could fall in the hands of the “pro-democracy” Al Qaeda rebels recruited and financed by several of America’s close allies including Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, in liaison with Washington and NATO headquarters in Brussels.

In a twisted logic, the Pentagon was to ensure that the rebels aligned with Al Qaeda would not acquire WMD, by actually training them in the use of chemical weapons:

The training [in chemical weapons], which is taking place in Jordan and Turkey, involves how to monitor and secure stockpiles and handle weapons sites and materials, according to the sources. Some of the contractors are on the ground in Syria working with the rebels to monitor some of the sites, according to one of the officials.

The nationality of the trainers was not disclosed, though the officials cautioned against assuming all are American. ([CNN](#), December 09, 2012, emphasis added

And once these Al Qaeda rebels had been supplied and trained in the use of WMDs by military contractors hired by the Pentagon, the Syrian government would then be held responsible for using the WMD against the Syrian people.

This in turn would provide a justification for a humanitarian R2P intervention to “protect” and come to the rescue of the Syrian people.

Believe it or not: that is the justification for waging a “humanitarian war” on Syria.

Michel Chossudovsky, May 7, 2013, minor updates and edits, September 12, 2015, April 11, 2018

The Syria Chemical Weapons Saga: The Staging of a US-NATO Sponsored Humanitarian Disaster?

by Michel Chossudovsky

December 12, 2012

Modeled on the Saddam Hussein WMD narrative, the propaganda ploy concerning the alleged threat of Syria’s chemical weapons has been building up over several months.

The Western media suggests –in chorus and without evidence– that a “frustrated” and “desperate” president Bashar al Assad is planning to use deadly chemical weapons against his own people. Last week, U.S. officials revealed to NBC News that “Syria’s military has loaded nerve-gas chemicals into bombs and are awaiting final orders from al-Assad”.

Western governments are now accusing Syria of planning a diabolical scheme on the orders of the Syrian head of State. Meanwhile, the media hype has gone into full gear. Fake reports on Syria’s WMD are funneled into the news chain, reminiscent of the months leading up to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The evolving media consensus is that “the regime of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad appears to be entering its twilight” and that the “international community” has a responsibility to come to the rescue of the Syrian people to prevent the occurrence of a humanitarian disaster.

“...Fears are growing in the West that Syria will unleash chemical weapons in a last-ditch act of desperation”

Recent reports that the embattled government of Syria has begun preparations for the use of chemical weapons [against the Syrian people] . After two years of civil war and more than 40,000 deaths, events in Syria may be heading to a bloody crescendo. ([WBUR](#), December 11, 2012)



Syria versus Iraq

Antiwar critics have largely underscored the similarities with the Iraq WMD ploy, which consisted in accusing the government of Saddam Hussein of possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The alleged WMD threat was then used as a justification to invade Iraq in March 2003.

The WMD Iraq ploy was subsequently acknowledged in the wake of the invasion as an outright fabrication, with president George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair actually recognizing that it was a “big mistake”. In a recent statement Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for [‘lying’ Blair and Bush to face trial in the Hague’s International Criminal Court](#)

The Syria WMD saga is in marked contrast to that of Iraq. The objective is not to “justify” an all out humanitarian war on Syria, using chemical weapons as a pretext.

An examination of allied military planning as well as the nature of US-NATO support to the opposition forces suggests a different course of action to that adopted in relation to Iraq (2003) and Libya (2011).

The purpose is indeed to demonize Bashar Al Assad but the objective at this stage is not the conduct of an all out “shock and awe” war on Syria, involving a full fledged air campaign. Such an action would, under present conditions, be a highly risky undertaking. Syria has advanced air defense capabilities, equipped with Russian Iskander missiles (see image) as well as significant ground forces. A Western military operation could also lead to a response from Russia, which has a naval base at the port city of Tartus in Southern Syria.

Moreover, Iranian forces from its revolutionary guards corps (IRGC) are present on the ground in Syria; Russian military advisers are involved in the training of the Syrian military.

In recent developments, Syria took delivery of the more advanced [Russian Iskander missile system, the Mach 6-7, in response to the deployment of US Made Patriot missiles in Turkey](#). Syria already possesses the less advanced E-Series Iskander. Syria is also equipped with the Russian ground to air defense missile system Pechora-2M. (see video below)



Iskander Mach 6-7



Description

The Pechora-2M is a surface-to-air anti-aircraft short-range missile system designed for destruction of aircraft, cruise missiles, assault helicopters and other air targets at ground, low and medium altitudes.

Non-Conventional Warfare

At this juncture, despite US-NATO military superiority, an all out military operation, for the reasons mentioned above, is not contemplated.

Non-conventional warfare remains the chosen avenue. Reports confirm that NATO-led military operations would be largely in support of rebel forces, its command structure, communications systems, recruitment, training, the transfer to rebel forces of more advanced weapons. Part of this undertaking including the training of rebels is being carried by private mercenary companies.

A limited and selective air campaign in support of the rebels, using Syria's chemical weapons bunker stockpiles as a pretext could be contemplated, but even this would be a risky undertaking given Syria's air defense capabilities.

What was on the drawing board of a recent "Semi-Secret" Meeting in London, hosted by General Sir David Julian Richards, head of Britain's Defense Staff is a coordinated military agenda characterised by "air and naval support, plus military training for the opposition".



The meeting in London included the participation of the military chiefs of France, Turkey, Jordan, Qatar, the UAE and the US. No further details were made public (See Felicity Arbuthnot, [Secret Meetings in London Plotting to Wage War on Syria without UN Authorization](#), Global Research, December 11, 2012)

The thrust of this London gathering behind closed doors (reported on December 10, 2012) was to support a unified military command structure of opposition forces designed to "unify insurgent ranks" fighting government forces. In practice, this will require a renewed influx of mercenaries under the supervision of Western special forces which are already on the ground inside Syria.

Staging a Humanitarian Disaster?

The training component of US-NATO action is of crucial importance. How does it relate to the Syria 'chemical weapons' issue?

The Western military alliance does not contemplate at this stage an all out war in response to Syria's possession of chemical weapons. What is contemplated is the need to train the opposition rebels in the handling of chemical weapons.

This specialized training program which was confirmed is already ongoing, implemented with the support of specialized private mercenary and security companies on contract to the Pentagon:

"The United States and some European allies are using defense contractors to train Syrian rebels on how to secure chemical weapons stockpiles in Syria, a senior U.S. official and several senior diplomats told CNN Sunday. ([CNN Report](#), December 9, 2012)

What is unfolding is a diabolical scenario -which is an integral part of military planning- namely a situation where opposition terrorists advised by Western defense contractors are actually in possession of chemical weapons.

✖ This is not a rebel training exercise in non-proliferation. While president Obama states that “you will be held accountable” if “you” (meaning the Syrian government) use chemical weapons, what is contemplated as part of this covert operation is the possession of chemical weapons by the US-NATO sponsored terrorists, namely “by our” Al Qaeda affiliated operatives, including the Al Nusra Front (see image on right), which constitutes the most effective Western financed and trained fighting group, largely integrated by foreign mercenaries. In a bitter twist, Jabhat al-Nusra, a US sponsored “intelligence asset”, was recently put on the State Department’s list of terrorist organizations.

The West claims that it is coming to the rescue of the Syrian people, whose lives are allegedly threatened by Bashar Al Assad. The truth of the matter is that the Western military alliance is not only supporting the terrorists, including the Al Nusra Front, it is also making chemical weapons available to its proxy “opposition” rebel forces.

The next phase of this diabolical scenario is that the chemical weapons could be used by the US-NATO recruited “opposition” terrorists against civilians, which could potentially lead an entire nation into a humanitarian disaster.

The broader issue is: who is a threat to the Syrian people? The Syrian government of Bashar al Assad or the US-NATO-Israel military alliance which is recruiting and training “opposition” terrorist forces.

The Syria Chemical Weapons Pretext: Background

The Syria Chemical Weapons Saga was launched last Summer. In early August, the Pentagon announced that it would send “small teams of special operations troops” into Syria with a view to destroying Syria’s Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). These teams would in turn be supported by “precision air strikes”, namely air raids. An all out aerial attack was not contemplated. According to the Pentagon, the precision strikes were intended to “destroy the chemical weapons without dispersing them in the air”, a highly risky undertaking...

Ironically, at the outset of this diabolical plan, the US special forces incursion and air operation were not to be directed against the Syrian regime. In fact quite the opposite. The stated intent of the operation was to protect civilians against “opposition” rebels, rather than government forces.

No accusations were directed against President Bashar al Assad to the effect that he was underhandedly conniving to use WMD against Syrian civilians. According to the Pentagon, the operation was to ensure that Syria’s WMDs, which allegedly “are left unguarded” in military bunkers around the country do not fall in the hands of opposition jihadist rebels who are fighting government forces:

Pentagon planners are more focused on protecting or destroying any Syrian stockpiles that are left unguarded and at risk [of] falling into the hands of rebel fighters or militias aligned with Al Qaeda, Hezbollah or other militant groups. ([U.S. has plans in place to secure Syria chemical arms - latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com), August 22, 2012

What the Pentagon was saying in August [2012], was that these WMD could fall in the hands of the “pro-democracy” freedom fighters recruited and financed by several of America’s

close allies including Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, in liaison with Washington and NATO headquarters in Brussels.

In essence, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta was refuting his own lies. In August he acknowledged the terrorist threat, now he is accusing Bashar Al Assad. Tacitly acknowledged by Washington, the majority of the Syrian freedom fighters are not only foreign mercenaries, they also belong to extremist Islamist groups, which are on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

Israel is a partner in the Syria chemical weapons operation in liaison with NATO and the Pentagon.

Training Terrorists in the Use of Chemical Weapons

If the Obama administration were genuinely concerned in preventing these chemical weapons from falling "in the wrong hands" (as suggested by the Pentagon in August), why then are they now training "opposition rebels" –largely composed of Salafist and Al Qaeda affiliated fighters– to gain control over government stockpiles of chemical weapons?

The training [in chemical weapons], which is taking place in Jordan and Turkey, involves how to monitor and secure stockpiles and handle weapons sites and materials, according to the sources. Some of the contractors are on the ground in Syria working with the rebels to monitor some of the sites, according to one of the officials.

The nationality of the trainers was not disclosed, though the officials cautioned against assuming all are American. ([CNN](#), December 09, 2012)

While the news report does not confirm the identity of the defense contractors, the official statements suggest a close contractual relationship to the Pentagon:

The US decision to hire unaccountable defense contractors to train Syrian rebels to handle stockpiles of chemical weapons seems dangerously irresponsible in the extreme, especially considering how inept Washington has so far been at making sure only trustworthy, secular rebels – to the extent they exist – receive their aid and the weapons that allies in the Gulf Arab states have been providing.

It also feeds accusations that the Syrian Foreign Ministry recently made that the US is working to frame the Syrian regime as having used or prepared for chemical warfare.

"What raises concerns about this news circulated by the media is our serious fear that some of the countries backing terrorism and terrorists might provide the armed terrorist groups with chemical weapons and claim that it was the Syrian government that used the weapons," the letters said."(John Glaser, [Us Defense Contractors Training Syrian Rebels](#), Antiwar.com, December 10, 2012, See also [CNN Report](#), December 9, 2012)

The central question is: what is the nature of this gruesome covert operation? Is the purpose of the US-NATO led operation to "prevent" or "encourage" the use of chemical weapons by the Free Syrian Army (FSA)?

The above report confirms that the US and NATO are training terrorists in the use of chemical weapons. Does this type of specialized training require the actual handling of toxic chemicals? In other words, is the Western military alliance, through its appointed defense contractors, making chemical weapons available to terrorists for training purposes?

Knowing that the Syrian insurgency is in large part made up of jihadists and Al Qaeda affiliated formations, this is hardly a means to “preventing” the actual use of chemical weapons against civilians. Moreover, amply documented, many of the “opposition” rebels who are receiving training in chemical weapons, have committed countless atrocities directed against Syrian civilians, including the massacres in Houla:

“Terrorist groups may resort to using chemical weapons against the Syrian people... after having gained control of a toxic chlorine factory [in Aleppo],” the foreign ministry said Saturday.” (Press TV, December 8, 2012)

It should be noted that the use of chemical weapons by opposition forces does not require that the rebels actually secure control over government stockpiles. Chemical weapons could easily be made available –from Western stockpiles– to the defense contractors involved in the specialized chemical weapons training programs.

Needless to say, the chemical weapons training and the involvement of private mercenary outfits on contract to NATO and the Pentagon, increase the risk; they create conditions which favor the use of chemical weapons by opposition forces, thereby potentially triggering a nationwide humanitarian disaster.

The US-NATO coalition has clarified at its “semi-secret” meeting in London (reported on December 10), however, that it does not contemplate “boots on the ground”. The special forces will be working with the opposition insurgency against government forces.

In the absence of an all out US-NATO military operation, the focus is on non-conventional warfare. In this context, one of several diabolical “options on the table” would be to create conditions whereby chemical weapons “fall in the hands” of the terrorists thereby potentially triggering a nationwide humanitarian disaster.

While this option, were it to be carried out, would not require a US-NATO military intervention, the humanitarian catastrophe would set the stage for the collapse of the Syrian government, namely the long sought objective of “regime change”.

The Libya or Iraq model is not an option. The strategic choice of the Western military alliance points towards the possible staging of a humanitarian catastrophe?

In the logic of war propaganda and media disinformation, the deaths of civilians resulting from the use of chemical weapons would be blamed on President Bashar Al Assad, with a view to enforcing subsequent actions by the US-NATO military alliance.

We are not suggesting that this option will inevitably be carried out. What we are saying is that the option of chemical weapons in the hands of the rebels which could potentially trigger a humanitarian disaster is on the US-NATO drawing board.

How can we ensure that this gruesome and diabolical option be thwarted and definitively shelved?

The issue must be brought into the open. Public opinion must be mobilized against the US-NATO-Israel led war.

Denounce the *Déjà Vu* WMD lies.

Challenge the mainstream media consensus.

Reveal and refute the lies and fabrications concerning Syria's chemical weapons program.

Spread the word, far and wide,

Bring the issue to the forefront of public debate, Confront the war criminals in high office.

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