

Yes, the US-Supported Syrian “Rebels” DO Have Access to Chemical Weapons

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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One of the U.S. government's main justifications for its claim that the Syrian government carried out a chemical weapons attack is that the rebels don't have chemical weapons.

However, multiple lines of evidence show that the rebels do have chemical weapons.

Potential Looting of Syrian Weapons

The Washington Post [noted](#) last December:

U.S. officials are increasingly worried that Syria's weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of Islamist extremists, rogue generals or other uncontrollable factions.

Last week, fighters from a group that the Obama administration has branded a terrorist organization were among rebels who seized the Sheik Suleiman military base near Aleppo, where research on chemical weapons had been conducted. Rebels are also closing in on another base near Aleppo, known as Safirah, which has served as a major production center for such munitions, according to U.S. officials and analysts.

A former Syrian general who once led the army's chemical weapons training program said that the main storage sites for mustard gas and nerve agents are supposed to be guarded by thousands of Syrian troops but that they would be easily overrun.

The sites are not secure, retired Maj. Gen. Adnan Silou, who defected to the opposition in June, said in an interview near Turkey's border with Syria. "Probably anyone from the Free Syrian Army or any Islamic extremist group could take them over," he said.

As the Syrian opposition steadily makes territorial gains, U.S. officials and analysts said the odds are increasing that insurgents will seize control of a chemical weapons site or that Syrian troops guarding the installations will simply abandon their posts.

"It's almost inevitable," [Michael Eisenstadt, a retired Army officer who directs

the military and security studies program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy] said. "It may have already happened, for what we know."

Last week, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said the al-Nusra Front — an anti-Assad group that has been labeled a terrorist organization by the United States and is also known as Jabhat al-Nusra — had seized a chlorine factory near the town of Safirah, east of Aleppo. "Terrorist groups may resort to using chemical weapons against the Syrian people," the ministry cautioned.

AP [reports](#):

Questions remaining about who actually controls some of Syria's chemical weapons stores

A report by the Office of the Director for National Intelligence outlining that evidence against Syria includes a few key caveats — including acknowledging that the U.S. intelligence community no longer has the certainty it did six months ago of where the regime's chemical weapons are stored

U.S. and allied spies have lost track of who controls some of the country's chemical weapons supplies, according to the two intelligence officials and two other U.S. officials.

U.S. analysts ... are also not certain that when they saw what looked like Assad's forces moving chemical supplies, those forces were able to remove everything before rebels took over an area where weapons had been stored.

AP hit the nail on the head when it [wrote](#):

U.S. intelligence officials are not so certain that the suspected chemical attack was carried out on Assad's orders, or even completely sure it was carried out by government forces, the officials said.

Another possibility that officials would hope to rule out: that stocks had fallen out of the government's control and were deployed by rebels in a callous and calculated attempt to draw the West into the war.

Looting of Libyan Chemical Weapons

Fox News [reported](#) in 2011:

In August, Fox News interviewed Rep. Mike Rogers, R.-Mich., who said he saw a chemical weapon stockpile in the country during a 2004 trip. At the time, he said the U.S. was concerned about "thousands of pounds of very active mustard gas."

He also said there is some sarin gas that is unaccounted for.

The Wall Street Journal [noted](#) in 2011:

Spread across the desert here off the Sirte-Waddan road sits one of the biggest threats to Western hopes for Libya: a massive, unguarded weapons depot that is being pillaged daily by anti-Gadhafi military units, hired work crews and any enterprising individual who has the right vehicle and chooses to make the trip.

In one of dozens of warehouses the size of a single-family home, Soviet-era guided missiles remain wrapped inside crates stacked to the 15-foot ceiling. In another, dusted with sand, are dozens of sealed cases labeled "warhead." Artillery rounds designed to carry chemical weapons are stashed in the back of another. Rockets, antitank grenades and projectiles of all calibers are piled so high they defy counting....

Convoys of armed groups from all over Libya have made the trek here and piled looted weapons into trailer trucks, dump trucks, buses and even empty meat trucks....

The highly-regarded NTI [reported](#) the same year:

In the desert near Sirte, there was no security for dozens of small armories at the complex, where weapons are removed every day by opposition fighters, paid contractors and others. In one structure, the word "warhead" was stamped on dozens of sealed containers. At another depot, empty chemical agent munitions were found.

There is at present no viable Libyan government-sanctioned force with the capacity to keep freelancer fighters from taking what they please from the warehouses, according to the Journal.

U.S. Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) visited the Libyan capital, where he said gaining control over the country's armories was a "very big topic."

"We have a game plan to secure the weapon caches, particularly biological and chemical weapons," McCain said.

The Telegraph [reported](#) last year:

Al Qaeda terrorists in North Africa could be in possession of chemical weapons, a leading Spanish intelligence officer said on Monday.

The head of National Police counter-terrorist intelligence, Commissioner-General Enrique Baron, told a strategic security conference in Barcelona that it was believed that the self-styled Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb - AQMI - could have acquired such arms in Libya or elsewhere during the Arab Spring last year.

Commissioner Baron told his audience: "The Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb has acquired and used very powerful conventional arms and probably also has non-conventional arms, basically chemical, as a result of the loss of control of arsenals."

The most likely place where this could have happened was in Libya during the uprising which overthrew the Gaddafi regime, said Commissioner Baron.

In his position as the head of Spanish National Police intelligence the Commissioner-General works closely with MI6, the CIA and other Western European intelligence services.

Remember, the head of the Libyan rebels [admitted](#) that the rebels were largely [Al Qaeda](#). [CNN](#), the [Telegraph](#), the [Washington Times](#), and many other mainstream sources confirm that Al Qaeda terrorists from Libya have since *flooded into Syria* to fight the Assad regime ... bringing their arms with them. And the post-Gaddafi Libyan government is also itself a [top funder](#) and [arms supplier](#) of the Syrian opposition. (CNN notes that the CIA [may have had a hand](#) in this operation.)

Other Countries

A reporter who has written extensively for [Associated Press](#), [BBC](#) and [National Public Radio](#) reports that *locals* in the area hit by chemical weapons allege that [Saudi Arabia](#) supplied the chemicals. And [see this](#).

Bush administration official [Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson](#) and British MP [George Galloway](#) speculate that Israel or another country may have given chemical weapons to the Syrian rebels.

We don't know which countries did or didn't give chemical weapons to the rebels. The point is that there are quite a few opportunities or possibilities.

Evidence of Possession and Use

The above, of course, is simply speculation. More important is actual evidence of possession and use.

Turkish state newspaper Zaman [reported](#) earlier this year ([Google translation](#)):

The Turkish General Directorate of Security ... seized 2 kg of sarin gas in the city of Adana in the early hours of yesterday morning. The chemical weapons were in the possession of Al Nusra terrorists believed to have been heading for Syria.

Haaretz reported on March 24th, "[Jihadists, not Assad, apparently behind reported chemical attack in Syria](#)".

UN investigator Carla Del Ponte said that there is strong evidence that the rebels used chemical weapons, but that there is not evidence that the government used such weapons:

There is also evidence that the rebels have recently used chemical weapons. See [this](#) and [this](#).

No wonder [experts are skeptical](#).

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