

# Congress Members Who Have Seen Classified Evidence About Syria Say It Fails to Prove Anything

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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## Classified Syria Intelligence Fails to Prove Assad Used Chemical Weapons

The administration's public case for chemical weapons use by the Syrian government is [extremely weak](#), and former high-level intelligence officers say that publicly-available information proves that the Syrian government [likely did not](#) carry out the chemical weapons attacks.

The Obama administration claims that *classified* intelligence proves that it was the Assad government which carried out the attacks.

But numerous congressional members who have seen the classified intelligence information says that it is no better than the public war brief ... and *doesn't prove anything*.

Congressman Justin Amash [said](#) last week:

What I heard in Obama admn briefing actually makes me **more skeptical** of certain significant aspects of Pres's case for attacking

He [noted](#) yesterday, after attending *another* classified briefing and reviewing *more* classified materials:

Attended another classified briefing on #Syria & reviewed add'l materials. **Now more skeptical than ever**. Can't believe Pres is pushing war.

Congressman Tom Harkin [said](#):

I have just attended a classified Congressional briefing on Syria that quite frankly **raised more questions than it answered**. I found the evidence presented by Administration officials to be circumstantial.

Congressman Michael Burgess [said](#):

Yes, I saw the classified documents. They were pretty thin.

Yahoo News [reports](#):

New Hampshire Democratic Rep. Carol Shea-Porter, for instance, left Thursday's classified hearing and said she was opposed to the effort "now so more than ever."

"I think there's a long way to go for the president to make the case," she said after the briefing. "It does seem there is a high degree of concern and leaning no."

Senator Joe Manchin announced he was voting "no" for a Syria strike [right after](#) hearing a classified intelligence briefng.

Congressman Alan Grayson [points out](#) in the New York Times:

The documentary record regarding an attack on Syria consists of just two papers: a four-page unclassified summary and a 12-page classified summary. The first enumerates only the evidence in favor of an attack. I'm not allowed to tell you what's in the classified summary, but you can draw your own conclusion. [I.e. it was no more impressive than the 4-page public version.]

On Thursday I asked the House Intelligence Committee staff whether there was any other documentation available, classified or unclassified. **Their answer was "no."**

The Syria chemical weapons summaries are based on several hundred underlying elements of intelligence information. The unclassified summary cites intercepted telephone calls, "social media" postings and the like, but **not one of these is actually quoted or attached** — not even clips from YouTube. (As to whether the classified summary is the same, I couldn't possibly comment, but again, draw your own conclusion.)

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And yet we members are supposed to accept, without question, that the proponents of a strike on Syria have accurately depicted the underlying evidence, even though the proponents **refuse to show any of it to us or to the American public.**

In fact, even gaining access to just the classified summary involves a series of unreasonably high hurdles.

We have to descend into the bowels of the Capitol Visitors Center, to a room four levels underground. Per the instructions of the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, note-taking is not allowed.

Once we leave, we are not permitted to discuss the classified summary with the public, the media, our constituents or even other members. **Nor are we allowed to do anything to verify the validity of the information that has been provided.**

And this is just the classified summary. It is my understanding that **the House Intelligence Committee made a formal request for the underlying intelligence reports several days ago. I haven't heard an answer yet. And frankly, I don't expect one.**

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By **refusing to disclose the underlying data even to members of Congress**, the administration is making it impossible for anyone to judge,

independently, whether that statement is correct.

The [rush to war based upon skewed intelligence](#) is [very similar to Iraq](#).

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