

How the Mainstream Media Whitewashed Al-Qaeda and the White Helmets in Syria

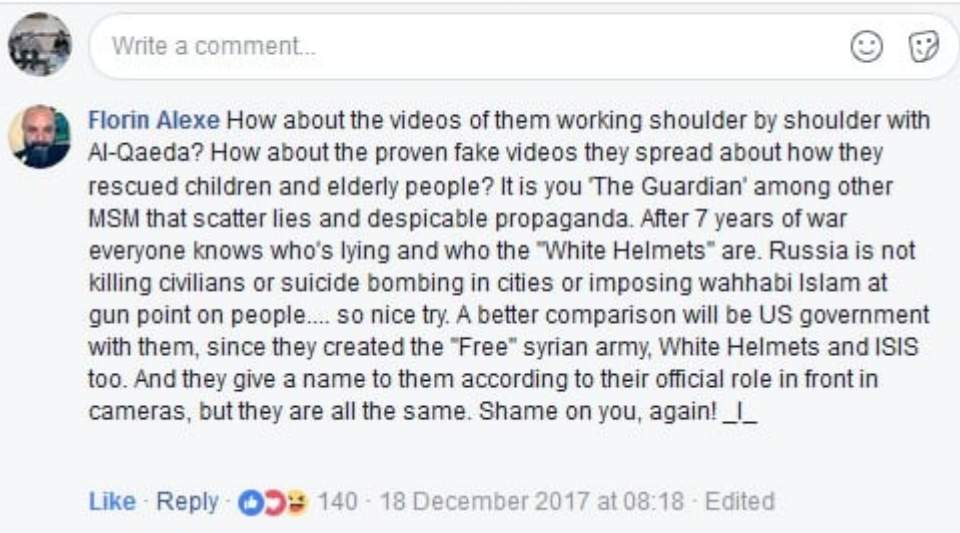
By [Eva Bartlett](#)

Global Research, January 06, 2018
In Gaza

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Terrorism](#),
[US NATO War Agenda](#)
In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

On December 18, 2017, The Guardian issued a shoddily-penned [hatchet piece](#) against British journalist **Vanessa Beeley**, **Patrick Henningsen** and his independent website 21st Century Wire, Australian professor and author **Tim Anderson**, and myself.

Judging by the [scathing comments](#) on The Guardian's Facebook post, the general public didn't buy it either. The Guardian, like [Channel 4 News](#) and [Snopes](#), [whitewashes terrorism](#) in Syria, employs non-sequitur arguments, promotes war propaganda, and simply gets the facts wrong:



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John Schoneboom Was kind of hoping I might see some journalism in this article. You know, a fair and accurate review of the allegations about the White Helmets and a reasoned rebuttal? Maybe a mention of their UK funding, or an inclusion of John Pilger's assessment? But nope! It's unsupported assertions, a trotting out of the old "conspiracy theory" dismissal, and a heavy dose of "hey look! Russia!"

"Look, independent journalists from the UK, Australia, and Canada are leading this so obviously this supports our theory that it was...Russia!"

But perhaps Solon's most shining moment is when she uncritically asserts that the reason the US is supporting an array of mercenaries and fanatics to illegally topple an elected government, occupy cities, hold civilians hostage, and generally wreak havoc and wage war in Syria is -- wait for it -- to "stabilise" the country.

I have to laugh just to keep myself from screaming. Shame on you, Olivia Solon. Shame on you, Guardian. This is a real stain on the once noble profession of journalism, from a once respectable newspaper.

Like · Reply · 🗨️👍👎 47 · 18 December 2017 at 19:38 · Edited



Youssef Kassissia The young author of this hit piece has zero credentials with respect to Syria or the middle East. According to her profile she joined the Guardian very recently and her previous experience was as a technology reporter. Her long rambling article repeats MSM propaganda as if it was gospel, adds some fancy graphs then proceeds to libel serious independent journalists who have risked their lives to go on the ground in Syria to seek the truth by seeing with their own eyes and hearing directly from Syrians. It all leads one to believe that she was asked to use her technology skills to help dress up the regime change propaganda. Perhaps in a technology language she would understand, here is the problem with her article: "garbage in garbage out".

Like · Reply · 🗨️👍👎 13 · 18 December 2017 at 20:49



Angela Foster Just remember The Guardian is still a propaganda spinning machine, <https://www.jonathan-cook.net/.../hsbc-and-the-sham-of-.../>



HSBC and the sham of Guardian's Scott Trust

JONATHAN-COOK.NET

Like · Reply · 9 · 18 December 2017 at 09:12

1 Reply



Stephen Burrows This article is a farce! The amount of lies and misinformation contained in it is astonishing. Olivia Solon should hang her head in shame. Her next job will be with the Dandy or Beano comic books!

Like · Reply · 5 · 19 December 2017 at 12:56



Mark Williams Right off the bat you know this piece is dishonest, because it doesn't even mention John Pilger.

The Guardian doesn't want you to know that John Pilger totally agrees with Vanessa Beeley and Eva Karene Bartlett that the White Helmets are "a complete propaganda construct" (HIS exact words).

Even if only to explain why Pilger is wrong, an honest article on this subject would have to address the views of this most famous and widely regarded critic, so well respected especially by the Guardian's longtime liberal/left readers.

The Guardian prefers to smear people like Vanessa Beeley, a much easier target, because she was not well known until her recent work on Syria. Well-behaved liberal readers who stay in the Guardian bubble will probably not even have heard of her, so the Guardian finds it easier to lie about her.

Like · Reply · 3 · 19 December 2017 at 21:26 · Edited



Robbie Rosenstand I have a few questions for Olivia Solon. Yes or no will suffice. Thanks in advance.

1 Have you ever seen a rescue worker stand on the bodies of dead soldiers and cheer?

2 Have you ever seen rescue workers with automatic rifles?

3 Have you ever seen rescue workers with known terrorists, dancing and cheering?

4 Have you ever seen rescue workers hand a Syrian civilian over to terrorists to be taken away?

5 Have you ever seen a rescue worker standing by watching an execution and waiting to take the body away for terrorists?

6 Have you ever seen a rescue worker kidnap and torture soldiers?

7 Have you ever seen a rescue worker, wearing flip flops, pick up samples of deadly Sarin ?

8 Have you ever heard or know of a rescue worker that's not allowed into a western country because they are on a terrorist list?

Patiently waiting,

Robbie.

Like · Reply · 9 · 18 December 2017 at 22:03



Peter McGrath And the video of them working with the terrorists was just staged eh, just like what they say the white helmets are doing, staging videos....funny how that works out.

Like · Reply · 201 · 18 December 2017 at 07:44

↳ 50 Replies



Darragh Crowley Eh well I would take what the Guardian has to say these days with a pinch of salt, it has after all become a neoliberal shitrag, promoting propaganda for war profiteers.

Like · Reply · 201 · 18 December 2017 at 08:39 · Edited

↳ 15 Replies



Gaya Alan The Guardian, pot calling the kettle black, are we.

It would not surprise me to find that. The Guardian's Russia fables are penned in a basement at the MI5 headquarters.

Like · Reply · 102 · 18 December 2017 at 07:48

↳ 16 Replies



Vic Singh The problem is The Guardian I used to know and love is no more, and has become PART of the propaganda machine.

Like · Reply · 107 · 18 December 2017 at 07:59

↳ 14 Replies



Michael Hallam Absolute rubbish of an article, Olivia Solon should actually do some investigative journalism or at least watch some of the footage of White Helmet's working alongside jihadists, there is plenty of footage...Blaming Russia for everything is tired, lazy and crap journalism.

Like · Reply · 72 · 18 December 2017 at 10:20



Lisa Jarvis You've really angered me with this one...the video footage proving they're Al Nusra is all over the internet...shame on you for promoting terrorists!!!

Like · Reply · 69 · 18 December 2017 at 09:08

↳ 14 Replies



Tim Hartley Another comedic article from you guys. Classic. The more time goes on the more you all stink of desperation.

Like · Reply · 79 · 18 December 2017 at 08:03

↳ 11 Replies



Jay Mann Anyone with any little knowledge and understanding of The Syrian conflict knows the White Helmets are basically a Western propaganda tool.

Like · Reply · 55 · 18 December 2017 at 08:45

↳ 10 Replies



Amina Mire I am neither a Russian nor a Syrian; The White Helmets is a propaganda tool which has been sponsored by the agents of regime change and that the WH failed to achieve the aim of regime change in Syria. The rest of your reporting is nothing other than pure BS.

Like · Reply · 67 · 18 December 2017 at 10:11



Fatima Madani I suggest to The Guardian to simply google white helmets and ISIS and you will see members of white helmets standing with ISIS AND holding their flags, over the years my Syrian friends posted photos of white helmets in uniform and the same guys with arms posing with Ahrar al Sham, Nour dine al Zenki and ISIS too

Like · Reply ·    35 · 18 December 2017 at 09:50



Marc Hyams I'm amazed with the white helmet photo of them helping children suffering from gas attacks in Syria as the children cough and splutter as the White helmet 'aid' workers help with no protective equipment whatsoever. Amazing how they're immune to gas attacks and such. Super humans, or something else? The MSM lie so much, you just do not know who to believe anymore.

Like · Reply ·   39 · 18 December 2017 at 08:16

 4 Replies



Denis Lee Hit pieces are strong today. The truth must be having an effect. The U.S. / British version of anything going on in Syria is highly suspect. We don't have to look for Russian influence. Just study the Iraq war. Honesty is our policy.

Like · Reply ·  23 · 18 December 2017 at 12:22





Alan Lonergan The White Helmets are sectarian bigots and are aligned to terrorist groups in Syria. Thankfully we have independent journalists like Vanessa Beeley who has spoken truth to power and helped expose this fraud.



Like · Reply ·   22 · 18 December 2017 at 14:02







Anne Phillips Disgusting Russia-phobic, pro-Western imperialism article. I look forward to the day when the Guardian goes bust.

Like · Reply ·   30 · 18 December 2017 at 09:15 · Edited


 **Tom Turner** The Guardian's support of the false narrative surrounding the White Helmets is astounding. Remind us of how many journalists you have out there. Your paper deserves to go bankrupt.
Like · Reply ·  6 · 19 December 2017 at 05:33

 **Gregory James Martinson** And what of the propaganda distributed by mainstream filth like this outlet suggesting that there is a militarily effective and credible "moderate" Syrian opposition when in fact the most dominant elements of Assad's opponents are ISIS sympathising fanatical Jihadists? Why are you so hellbent on pushing the destabilising and harmful agenda of regime change which has wreaked havoc in the Middle East?
Like · Reply ·  14 · 18 December 2017 at 08:11

 **John Baker** This piece provides little convincing evidence against the initial complaints about the history, tactics and support framework that are the background to the 'White Helmets'. In the end you have to look for the hard evidence provided - it simply isn't there.
Like · Reply ·  3 · 18 December 2017 at 15:40

 **Esined Nebborg** "It's all part of an effort to delegitimise western efforts to stabilise Syria," he said."
Sure, Russia is just out to destabilize Syria. While the west has done such good work stabilizing all those other countries. You've got to be joking. Using 'man... See more
Like · Reply ·  10 · 18 December 2017 at 08:40

↪ 1 Reply

 **Stanley Koulouris** Olivia Solon pens another uninformed propaganda article in the British "Al Jazeera", The Guardian. An opinion piece that's scantily researched, lacking any real critical analysis. Ironically, she criticises other journalists and academics, who unlike he... See more

As the purported theme of **The Guardian's** story was the issue of rescuers in Syria, I'll begin by talking about actual rescuers I know and worked with, in hellish circumstances in Gaza.

In 2008/9, I volunteered with Palestinian medics under 22 days of relentless, indiscriminate, Israeli war plane and Apache helicopter bombings, shelling from the sea and tanks, and drone strikes. The loss of life and casualties were immense, with over 1,400 Palestinians murdered, and thousands more maimed, the vast majority civilians. Using run-down, bare-bones equipment (as [actual rescuers](#) in Syria do), Palestinian medics worked tirelessly day and night to rescue civilians.

There was not a single occasion in which I ever heard the medics (in Sunni Gaza) shout *takbeeror Allahu Akbar* upon rescuing civilians, **much less intentionally stood on dead bodies, posed in staged videos, or any of the other revolting acts that the White Helmets have been filmed doing in Syria.** They were too damn busy rescuing or evacuating the areas before another Israeli strike, and usually maintained a [focused silence](#) as they worked, communicating only the necessities. The only occasion I recall of screaming while with the medics, were the screams of civilians we collected and in particular the [anguished shrieks](#) of a husband helping to put the body parts of his dismembered wife onto a stretcher to be taken to the morgue. The medics I knew in Gaza were true heroes. The White Helmets, not a chance. They are gross caricatures of rescuers.



A White Helmets member. “Unarmed and neutral”?

Reply to The Guardian

In October, a San Francisco-based tech (and [sometimes fashion](#)) Guardian writer named Olivia Solon (visibly with no understanding of Middle East geopolitics) emailed myself and Beeley with nearly identical questions filled with implicit assumptions for a Guardian “story” we were to be imminently featured in. My own correspondence with The Guardian’s Olivia Solon is as follows:

On 5 October 2017 at 13:29, Olivia Solon <

> wrote:

Hi Eva,

I am a reporter for The Guardian and I'd like to interview you about the White Helmets.

As I understand it, you believe the mainstream media narrative about the White Helmets is wrong and that they have ties to terrorist organizations and recycle children in their rescue videos (which other news organizations have debunked)

I am interested in what you make of their Nobel Peace Prize nomination as well as finding out what your relationship is to the Syrian government. I note that you have made trips to Syria and North Korea and I am interested in how those trips came about, given how tightly controlled access is to both countries.

Do you have time for an interview today or tomorrow?

Kind regards,

Olivia

--

Olivia Solon
Guardian News & Media
San Francisco



Olivia Solon <olivia.solon@theguardian.com>

Fri 2017-10-06, 8:31 PM

You; evakbartlett2017@gmail.com



Hi Eva,

I haven't heard back from you yet and we are planning on publishing our story on Monday 9th October about the people who believe the White Helmets are terrorists (or at least linked to terrorists) and propagandists promoting an imperialist agenda.

You are featured in the story and I would love to include your voice within it. I am including the key parts of the story where you are mentioned below. It would be great if you could respond to them by number by 6pm Pacific Time on Sunday 8 October 2017 (2 days from now). We will be sure to carefully consider any comments you make. If you do not choose to respond to the numbered points by Sunday evening, we shall proceed on the basis that you have no comment you wish to make.

1. That you form part of a truther campaign dedicated to exposing the White Helmets as having links to terrorists and being a propaganda vehicle for pushing a US imperialist agenda - they are, in your view, part of a movement to demonise and destabilise the Syrian government.
2. That you attract a large online audience amplified by high-profile right-wing personalities and appearances on Russian state TV.
3. The Syria Campaign (which promotes the work of the White Helmets) argues that your work forms part of a "disinformation campaign" that is putting the lives of "peaceful humanitarians" at risk.
4. You believe that children are recycled in White Helmet footage (something that Channel 4 News and Snopes claim to have debunked). Do you still believe this?

you still believe this?

5. That the anti White Helmet campaign is supported/promoted by a Russian-backed propaganda machine, which helps shape public perception in favour of Assad, raising questions about chemical weapons attacks.
6. That you think that Assad is being demonized by the US as a means to drive regime change.

I also have a few questions for you:

1. Have you ever received any funding, payment in kind or free trips or gifts from Russia or Syria?
2. Do you believe that Assad's army has committed any war crimes/used chemical weapons against his own people and bombing aid convoys - as the UN Security Council believes?
3. Even if you believe the White Helmets are propagandists, do you believe they are doing any good work in rescuing civilians? Or is it all a sham, in your opinion?
4. Could you briefly outline your training as an investigative reporter?

Please do not hesitate to contact me on my cell phone on [redacted] or email me here.

Kind regards,

Olivia

On 6 October 2017 at 08:35, Olivia Solon <

> wrote:

Hi Eva,

Just following up on this. Do you have anything to say about the White Helmets not winning this year's Nobel Peace Prize?

Kind regards,

Olivia

Interview request - The Guardian



eva bartlett

Sun 2017-10-08 12:27 AM

Olivia Solon (olivia.solon@theguardian.com) ✉



Thanks but no thanks, Olivia, I have no interest in participating in your quite evidently already-decided "story" (odd term for a journalist to use for an article).

You have stated that I am featured in your "story", and I'm well aware that you require a quote from me in order to make your "story" seem legitimate, and that from any reply I gave to your loaded list of talking points you would choose only those quotes which serve your predetermined script, for your "story".

You should be aware that if I see any libelous content in your "story" I will write my own rebuttal to the Guardian, which I expect will not publish it in full or at all, in which case I will lodge a complaint against the Guardian.

Good evening.

Eva

In brief, I'll address Solon's emails, including some of her most loaded questions:

-Who is the "we", Solon mentions? Her mention of "we" indicates this story isn't her own bright idea, nor independently researched and penned. Parts of the article—including the title and elements I'll outline later in my article—seem to be lifted from others' previous articles, but that's copy-paste journalism for you.

-It isn't just that **I believe** the mainstream media narrative about the White Helmets is wrong; this narrative has been **redundantly-exposed** over the years. In September 2014, Canadian independent journalist **Cory Morningstar** [investigated](#) hidden hands behind flashy PR around the White Helmets. In April 2015, American independent journalist **Rick Sterling** [revealed that](#) the White Helmets had been founded by Western powers and managed by a British ex-soldier, and noted the "rescuers" role in calling for Western intervention—a No Fly Zone on Syria. (more on these articles below). This was months before Russian media began to write about the White Helmets.

Since then, **Vanessa Beeley** has done the [vast amount of research](#) in greater detail, doing on-the-ground investigations in Syria, including: taking the testimonies of Syrian civilians who had (often brutal) experiences with the White Helmets; establishing that the [Syrian Civil Defense exists](#) and [has existed since 1953](#), but are not the White Helmets—which has misappropriated this name; establishing that the international body, the International Civil Defence organisation in Geneva, [does not recognize the White Helmets](#) as the Syrian Civil Defence; establishing that men now White Helmets members [looted vehicles and equipment](#) from the Syrian Civil Defence in Aleppo—and [belongings from civilians](#); and establishing that [White Helmets shared a building](#) in Bab Al Nairab, eastern Aleppo with al-Qaeda and were present as al-Qaeda tortured civilians, among other points.

It is hard to believe that in the span of the two months between her contacting Beeley and myself that Solon, in her certainly deep investigations, has not seen [this video](#), clearly showing uniformed White Helmets members with supporters of Saudi terrorist, Abdullah Muhaysini. Not quite "neutral" rescuers. But then, perhaps she did. She was willing to **write off the presence of White Helmets members at execution scenes, standing on dead Syrian soldiers, and holding weapons**, as a few bad apples sort of thing.

-As to The Guardian's interest in my "**relationship**" to the Syrian government: No, I have not received payment, gifts or other from any government. To the contrary, I've poured my own money into going to Syria (and have fund-raised, and also routinely [received Paypal donations](#) or [support on Patreon](#) by individuals who appreciate my work). See my [article on this matter](#).

As to how my visits to Syria and North Korea came about, this is another **transparent attempt** to imply that I am on the payroll of/receive other benefits from one or more of the governments in question.

One of The Guardian's questions in the emails was regarding my following: "That **you attract a large online audience**, amplified by **high-profile right-wing personalities** and **appearances on Russian state TV**." (emphasis added)

What following I do have began exactly one year ago, after I requested to [speak in a panel](#) at the United Nations, as the [US Peace Council](#) had [done in August 2016](#). It is as a result of a short interaction between myself and a Norwegian journalist, which went viral, that my online audience grew. In fact, I deeply regret that what went viral was not the important content of the three other panelists and my own over twenty minutes report on [conditions in Aleppo](#) which was then still under daily bombardments and snipings by what the West deems "moderates".

However, given that **so many people responded positively** regarding the interaction—which dealt with lies of the corporate media and lack of sources—it seems that **the public already had a sense that something was not right** with corporate media's renditions on Syria.

The first person to cut and [share the video clip](#) in question (on December 10, one day following the panel) was Twitter profile @Walid970721. As I have since met him personally, I can attest he is neither Russian nor funded by the Kremlin, nor any government, and that he shared that clip out of his own belief that it was of interest. Otherwise, on December 10, before any major Russian media had, HispanTV also [shared my words](#). Further, [India-based](#) internet media Scoop Whoop's [December 15 share](#) garnered the most views (nearly 10.5 million by now). That Russian media later shared the clip and reported on the incident is neither my doing: thank you Russian media for doing what Western corporate media always fail to do.

-Regarding The Guardian Solon's question: "That you think that **Assad is being demonized by the US as a means to drive regime change**." Of course I do, as do most analysts and writers not blinded by or obliged to the [NATO narrative](#). As Rick Sterling [wrote](#) in September 2016:

"This disinformation and propaganda on Syria takes three distinct forms. The first is **the demonization of the Syrian leadership**. The second is the romanticization of the opposition. The third form involves attacking anyone questioning the preceding characterizations."

Boston Globe contributor, award-winning foreign correspondent and author, **Stephen Kinzer** [wrote](#) in February 2016:

“Astonishingly brave correspondents in the war zone, including Americans, seek to counteract Washington-based reporting. At great risk to their own safety, these reporters are pushing to find the truth about the Syrian war. Their reporting often illuminates the darkness of groupthink. Yet for many consumers of news, their voices are lost in the cacophony. Reporting from the ground is often overwhelmed by the Washington consensus.”

Countering corporate media’s demonization campaigns, I’ve written on many occasions—notably including the **words of Syrians within Syria**—about the vast amount of support the Syrian president enjoys inside of Syria and outside.

In my [March 7, 2016 article](#), I cited meeting with internal, unarmed, opposition members, including Kurdish representative, **Berwine Brahim**, who stated,

“We want you to convey that conspiracy, terrorism and interference from Western countries has united supporters of the government and the opposition, to support President Bashar al-Assad.”

In that same article, I wrote:

“Wherever I’ve gone in Syria (as well as many months in various parts of Lebanon, where I’ve met Syrians from all over Syria) [I’ve seen](#) wide evidence of broad support for President al-Assad. The pride I’ve seen in a majority of Syrians in their President surfaces in the posters in homes and shops, in patriotic songs and Syrian flags [at celebrations](#) and in [discussions with](#) average Syrians of all faiths. Most Syrians **request that I tell exactly what I have seen and to transmit the message that it is for Syrians to decide their future, that they support their president and army** and that the only way to stop the bloodshed is for Western and Gulf nations to stop sending terrorists to Syria, for Turkey to stop warring on Syria, for the West to stop their nonsense talk about ‘[freedom](#)’ and ‘democracy’ and leave Syrians to decide their own future.”

In my [May 2014 article](#) from Lebanon, having independently observed the first of two days of Syrians streaming to their embassy to vote in presidential elections, I cited some of the many Syrians there with whom I spoke (in Arabic):

“‘We love him. I’m Sunni, not Alawi,’ Walid, from Raqqa, noted. ‘They’re afraid our voices will be heard,’ he said....’ I’m from Deir Ezzor,’ said a voter. ‘ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is in our area. We want Bashar al-Assad. The guy walks straight,’ he said, with a gesture of his hand.”

No one escorted me in a Syrian government vehicle to that embassy, by the way. I took a bus, and then walked the remaining many kilometres (the road was so clogged with vehicles going to the embassy) with Syrians en route to vote.

In June 2014, a week after the elections within Syria, I traveled by public bus to Homs (once dubbed the “capital of the revolution”), where [I saw Syrians celebrating the results of the election](#), one week after the fact, and spoke with Syrians beginning to clean up and patch up homes damaged from the terrorist occupation of their district.

When I [returned to Homs](#) in December 2015, shops and restaurants had re-opened where a year and a half prior they were destroyed. People were preparing to celebrate Christmas as they could not do when terrorists ruled. In Damascus, attending a choral concert I overheard people asking one another excitedly whether “he” was here. The day prior, President Assad and the First Lady had dropped in on the practising choir, to their surprise and delight. And although the church was within hitting distance of mortars fired by the west’s “moderates” (and indeed that area had been repeatedly hit by mortars), the people faced that prospect in hopes of a re-visit by the President.

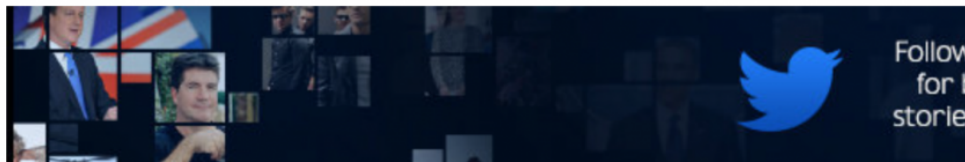
These are just some of [many examples](#) of the support Syria’s president sees and the attempts to vilify him and [other Syrian leadership](#). Even Fox News [acknowledged his support](#), referring to the 2014 elections:

“...it underscored the considerable support that President Bashar Assad still enjoys from the population, including many in the majority Sunni Muslim community. ...Without Sunni support, however, Assad’s rule would have collapsed long ago.”

Regarding war crimes, Syria is fighting a war against terrorism, but corporate media continues fabricating claims, and repeating those fabricated, uninvestigated, accusations. For example, the repeated claim of the Syrian government starving civilians. In my on the ground investigations, I’ve revealed the truth behind starvation (and hospitals destroyed, and “[last doctors](#)”) [in Aleppo](#), in [Madaya, in al-Waer](#), in [Old Homs \(2014\)](#). In all instances, starvation and lack of medical care was solely due to terrorists—including al-Qaeda—hoarding food (and medical supplies). Vanessa Beeley has in greater depth exposed those lies regarding eastern Aleppo.

Regarding chemical weapons accusations, those have long been negated by the investigations of **Seymour Hersh** (on [Ghouta 2013](#); on [Khan Sheikhoun 2017](#)) and the UN’s own **Carla Del Ponte** who [said](#):

“...there are strong, concrete suspicions but not yet incontrovertible proof of the use of sarin gas, from the way the victims were treated. This was **use on the part of the opposition, the rebels, not by the government authorities.**”



UN accuses Syrian rebels of carrying out sarin gas attacks which had been blamed on Assad's troops

- **Carla Del Ponte said UN Commission investigating war crimes in Syria has 'strong, concrete suspicions' that rebels used chemical weapons**
- **Her remarks contradict statements by the U.S. and UK which said intelligence indicated Syrian soldiers used the weapons**
- **Today fighting continued across Syria as rebels advanced on a northern airbase and shot down helicopter in the east**

By [DAMIEN GAYLE](#) and [MAIL FOREIGN SERVICE](#)

PUBLISHED: 14:18 BST, 6 May 2013 | **UPDATED:** 07:31 BST, 7 May 2013

Regarding convoys allegedly bombed, see [my own article on one such claim](#).

Regarding whether the White Helmets have done any good work rescuing civilians: they are working **solely in areas occupied by al-Qaeda and affiliated terrorists, so no one can prove whether they have actually done any rescue work of civilians**. However, we have numerous on the ground [witness testimonies](#) to the contrary, that the **White Helmets denied medical care to civilians not affiliated with terrorist groups**.

In September 2017, **Murad Gazdiev** (instrumental in his honest reporting from Aleppo during much of 2016) [documented how](#) the White Helmets headquarters in Bustan al-Qasr, Aleppo, was filled with Hell Canons (used to fire gas canister bombs on [Aleppo's civilians and infrastructure](#)) and remnants of a bomb-making factory. The headquarters was in a school.

Gazdiev's reporting on the headquarters was preceded by French citizen **Pierre Le Corf**, living in Aleppo for over the past year, [who visited the White Helmets headquarters](#) in March 2017 (and again [in April](#)), **documenting the al-Qaeda and ISIS linked flags, logos, and paraphernalia found inside the White Helmets headquarters, and that the White Helmets' headquarters was next to a central al-Qaeda (Jabhat al-Nusra) headquarters**. Le Corf also [wrote about his encounters](#) with civilians from Aleppo's east, and their take on the White Helmets:

“...the last two families I met told me that **they helped the injured terrorists first and sometimes left the civilians in the rubble. When the camera was spinning everyone was agitated, as soon as the camera extinguished, the lives of the people under rubble took less importance....** all the videos you’ve seen in the media come from one or the other. Civilians couldn’t afford cameras or 3G internet package when it was already difficult to buy bread, only armed and partisan groups.”

Vanessa Beeley took testimonies from civilians from eastern, al-Qaeda-occupied Aleppo, in December 2016 when the city was liberated. Beeley later [wrote](#):

“When I asked them if they knew of the “civil defence”, they all nodded furiously and said, **“yes, yes - Nusra Front civil defence”. Most of them elaborated and told me that the Nusra Front civil defence never helped civilians, they only worked for the armed groups.**”

Beeley also [wrote of](#) the White Helmets’ complicity in the massacre of civilians ([including 116 children](#)) from Foua and Kafraya in April 2017.

Credentials, Please: What Is Journalism?

Regarding The Guardian’s question on my competency as a journalist, I note the following.

I began reporting from on the ground in Palestine in 2007, first blogging and later publishing in various online media.

In 2007, I spent 8 months in the occupied West Bank in occupied Palestine, in some of the most dangerous areas where Palestinians are routinely abused, attacked, abducted and killed by both the Israeli army and the illegal Jewish colonists. There, I began blogging, [documenting the crimes](#) in print with witness testimonies, first person interviews, my own eye-witness experiences, photos and videos.

After being deported from Palestine by the Israeli authorities in December 2007, in 2008 [I sailed to Gaza from Cyprus](#) and documented not only the daily Israeli assaults on unarmed male, female, elderly and child [farmers](#) and [fishers](#), but also the effects of the brutal Israeli full [siege on Gaza](#), Israel’s sporadic bombings and land invasions, and of course two major massacres ([Dec 2008/Jan 2009](#) and [Nov 2012](#)).

In the 2008/2009 war against Palestinian civilians, I was on the ground in northern Gaza with rescuers—actual rescuers, no acting, no staging—under the bombings, and [under heavy sniper fire](#). I was also on an upper floor of a media building in Gaza City that was [bombed while I was in it](#). And otherwise, I remained in Gaza after the slaughter had ended, [taking horrific testimonies, documenting Israel’s war crimes](#), including Israel’s: [assassinations](#) of children, widespread [use of White Phosphorous](#) on civilians; [holding civilians](#) as human shields; and [targeting](#) (and killing) of medics.

See [this link](#) for a more detailed description of this documentation, with many examples, and my further documentation during the November 2012 Israeli massacre of Palestinians, as well as detailed accounts of my reporting from seven trips, on the ground, around Syria.

While questioning my credentials as an investigative reporter in the Middle East, The Guardian casually assigned the story to a San Francisco based writer specializing in [fluff](#)

[pieces, fashion and Russophobic analysis](#), who visibly has little to no understanding of what is happening on the ground in Syria.

Addressing “the propaganda that is so often disguised as journalism,” award-winning journalist and film maker, [John Pilger](#), [said](#) (emphasis added):

“**Edward Bernays**, the so-called father of public relations, wrote about an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. He was referring to journalism, the media. That was almost 80 years ago, not long after corporate journalism was invented. It’s a history few journalists talk about or know about, and it began with the arrival of corporate advertising.

As the new corporations began taking over the press, something called ‘**professional journalism**’ was invented. To attract big advertisers, the new corporate press had to appear respectable, pillars of the establishment, objective, impartial, balanced. The first schools of journalism were set up, and a mythology of liberal neutrality was spun around the professional journalists. The right to freedom of expression was associated with the new media.

...**The whole thing was entirely bogus**. For what the public didn’t know, was that in order to be professional, journalists had to ensure that news and opinion **were dominated by official sources**. And that hasn’t changed. Go through the New York Times on any day, and check the sources of the main political stories, domestic and foreign, and you’ll find that they’re **dominated by governments and other establishment interests**. That’s the essence of professional journalism.”

On a publicly-shared [Facebook post](#), journalist [Stephen Kinzer](#) wrote:

“I happen to agree with Eva’s take on Syria, but from a journalist’s perspective, the true importance of what she does goes beyond reporting from any single country. She challenges the accepted narrative—and that is the essence of journalism. Everything else is stenography. Budding foreign correspondents take note!!”

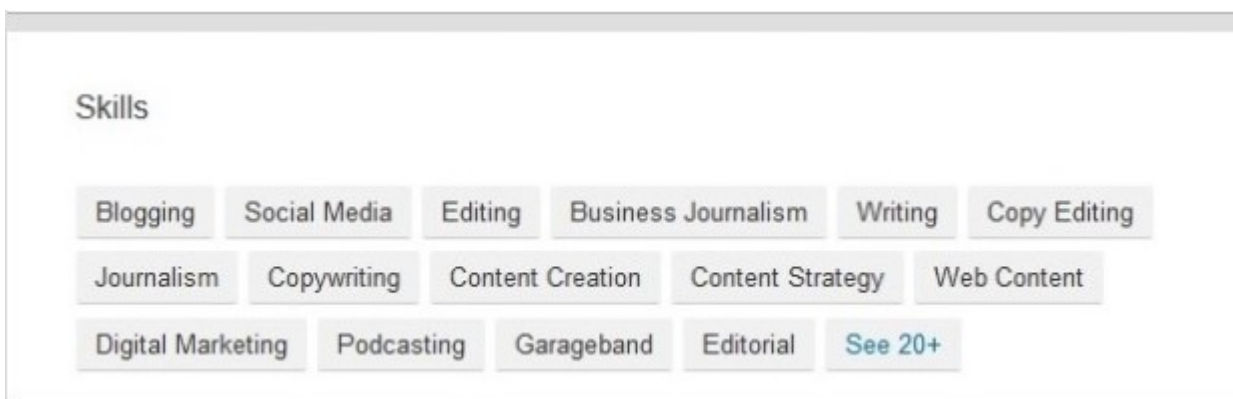
In The Guardian’s smear piece, Solon employed a tactic used to denigrate the credibility of an investigative journalist by dubbing he/she merely a “blogger”. In her *story*, Solon used “blogger” four times, three times in reference to Vanessa Beeley (who contributes in depth articles to a variety of online media).

In the latter case, she quoted executive director of the Purpose Inc-operated “Syria Campaign” PR project, [James Sadri](#) saying:

“A blogger for a [9/11 truther website](#) who only visited Syria for the first time last year should not be taken seriously as an impartial expert on the conflict.”

Remind me when either Sadri or Solon was last there? Seems to be [2008 for Sadri](#), and never for Solon. But they are “credible” and someone like Beeley who has since her first 2016 visit to Syria had returned numerous occasions, in the country at pivotal times—like during the liberation of Aleppo, speaking with Syrian civilians from eastern areas formerly occupied by al-Qaeda and co-extremists—is not?

As for bloggers, there are many insightful writers and researchers self-publishing on blogs (for example, [this blog](#)). However, that aside, it is amusing to note that Solon on [her LinkedIn profile](#) list her first skill as blogging. Is she a mere *blogger*?



Regarding Solon’s use of the “truthers” theme, did she recycle this from an [article on Wired](#) peddled eight months ago? Her use of “truthers” is clearly to paint anyone who investigates the White Helmets as Alex Jones-esque.

Is she capable of originality?



Nov 4, 2016: Less than 100 metres away, the second of two mortars fired by terrorist factions less than 1 km from Castello Road on Nov. 4. The road and humanitarian corridor were targeted at least seven times that day by terrorist factions. Many of those in corporate media had retired to the bus, and donned helmets and flak jackets. I was on the road without such luxuries. Read about it [here](#).

Guardian Uses CIA “Conspiracy Theory” Tactic

In addition to using denigrating terms, The Guardian threw in the loaded CIA term “conspiracy theorists”.

As **Mark Crispin Miller**, [Professor](#) of Media Studies and [author](#), noted in a June 2017 [panel](#) (emphasis added):

“Conspiracy theory was not much used by journalist for the decades prior to 1967, when suddenly it’s used all the time, and increasingly ever since.

And the reason for this is that the CIA at that time sent a memo to its station chiefs world wide, urging them to use their propaganda assets and friends in the media, to discredit the work of Mark Lane... books attacking the Warren Commission Report. Mark Lane’s was a best seller, so the **CIA’s response was to send out this memo urging a counter-attack**, so that hacks responsive to the agency would write reviews **attacking these authors as ‘conspiracy theorists’** and using one or more of five specific arguments listed in the memo.”

Guess Solon got the memo.

Professor James Tracy [elaborated](#):

Conspiracy theory” is a term that at once strikes fear and anxiety in the hearts of most every public figure, particularly journalists and academics. **Since the 1960s the label has become a disciplinary device that has been overwhelmingly effective in defining certain events off limits to inquiry or debate.** Especially in the United States raising legitimate questions about dubious official narratives destined to inform public opinion (and thereby public policy) is a major thought crime that must be cauterized from the public psyche at all costs.”

Researcher and writer **Kevin Ryan** [noted](#) (emphasis added):

““In the 45 years before the CIA memo came out, the phrase ‘conspiracy theory’ appeared in the Washington Post and New York Times only 50 times, or about once per year. **In the 45 years after the CIA memo, the phrase appeared 2,630 times, or about once per week.**

“...Of course, in these uses the phrase is always delivered in a context in which ‘conspiracy theorists’ were **made to seem less intelligent and less rationale** than people who uncritically accept official explanations for major events. President George W. Bush and his colleagues often used the phrase conspiracy theory in attempts to deter questioning about their activities.”

In her piece for the Guardian, Solon threw in the *Russia is behind **everything** clause.*

Scott Lucas (whom Solon quotes in her own article) in August 2017 [wrote](#) (emphasis added):

“Russian State outlets have pursued a **campaign** — especially since

Moscow's **military intervention in September 2015.**"

Solon's article? (emphasis added):

"The **campaign** to discredit the White Helmets started at the same time as Russia staged a **military intervention in Syria in September 2015...**"

But I'm sure this is a mere coincidence.

Initial Investigations Into The White Helmets Precede Russia's

As mentioned earlier in this article, in 2014 and early 2015, long before any Russian media took notice, **Cory Morningstar** and **Rick Sterling** were already [countering the official story](#) of the White Helmets.

Morningstar on September 17, 2014, [wrote](#):

"The New York public relations firm Purpose has created at least four anti-Assad NGOs/campaigns: **The White Helmets**, Free Syrian Voices [3], The Syria Campaign [4] and March Campaign #withSyria. ...The message is clear. Purpose wants the green light for military intervention in Syria, well-cloaked under the guise of humanitarianism – an oxymoron if there ever was one."

This is where the White Helmets step in.

Rick Sterling's [April 9, 2015, article](#) looked at the White Helmets as a PR project for western intervention in Syria. He wrote (emphasis added):

"White Helmets is the newly minted name for "Syrian Civil Defence". Despite the name, Syria Civil Defence was **not created by Syrians nor does it serve Syria. Rather it was created by the UK and USA in 2013.** Civilians from rebel controlled territory were paid to go to Turkey to receive some training in rescue operations. The program was **managed by James Le Mesurier, a former British soldier and private contractor** whose company is [based in Dubai.](#)"

Since her initial [scrutiny into the White Helmets](#) in September 2015, by October [revealing their ties to executioners](#) in Syria, [Vanessa Beeley](#) has relentlessly pursued the organization, and the lies and propoganda around it, their funding of at least [over \\$150 million](#), far more than needed for medical supplies and high-tech camera equipment.

As 21st Century Wire [pointed out](#) (emphasis added):

"Note that The Guardian and Olivia Solon also claim that the White Helmets are **only "volunteers"** – a foundational misrepresentation designed to generate sympathy for their employees. One could call this a gross lie when you consider the fact the White Helmets are **paid a regular salary** (which the Guardian deceptively call a 'stipend') which is in fact **much higher than the national average salary in Syria** – a fact conveniently left out in the Guardian's apparent foreign office-led propoganda piece:

...Guardian informationists like Solon would never dare mention that the White Helmet's 'monthly stipend' is **far in excess** of the standard salary for a Syrian Army soldier who is lucky to take home \$60 -\$70 per month."

The Guardian Whitewashes the White Helmets

What are some things The Guardian could have investigated, had Solon's story not been predetermined and had she approached with an honest intent to investigate the White Helmets?

-Solon very misguidedly chose to highlight the White Helmets' ["mannequin challenge" video](#), writing that the video was "stripped of its context". What was the context? That the White Helmets, **supposedly** frantically, full-time rescuing civilians under the bombs, took time to make a video **simulating a heroic rescue scene**? The video **reveals the patently obvious** point that the White Helmets **can clearly stage a very convincing "rescue" video**. But Solon ignores this point, it doesn't fit her factless, Russophobic *story*. Further, I cannot imagine any of the Palestinian rescuers I worked with wasting a moment of precious time for such an absurd video.

-That in spite of the White Helmets' professed motto, "To save a life is to save all of humanity" they **willingly participated in executions of civilians**. But Solon wrote those extremist-affiliated White Helmets who hold weapons or stand on dead bodies or chant with al-Qaeda off as **"isolated"** and **"rogue"** actors, in spite of **overwhelming evidence to the contrary**. Best part? It wasn't Russia which photographed them, it was from [their own social media accounts](#), where they **proudly displayed their allegiance to terrorists**.

In her attempt to defend the "rogue" assertion, Solon brings in White Helmets leader, **Raed Saleh**, who she doesn't mention **was denied entry to the US in April 2016**, and [deemed by](#) the State Department's **Mark Toner** to have **ties to extremists**.

Here's [one poignant example](#) of a *rogue actor* who was *dealt with* by White Helmets' leadership:

"Muawiya Hassan Agha was present at Rashideen, and he later became infamous for his involvement in the execution of two prisoners of war in Aleppo. For this rogue bad apples he was **supposedly fired from the White Helmets, although he was later photographed still with them**. He has also been photographed celebrating 'victory' with Nusra Front in Idlib."

-The soldiers which The Guardian calls "pro-Assad fighters" are actually members of **Syria's national army**. Lexicon is important, and by denigrating members of the national army, **The Guardian** is playing a very old, and once again **lacking in originality, lexicon card** worthy of some UN member states who violate UN protocol and in the UN call the Syrian government a "regime" (as Solon also does...) instead of government.

-That it is not the **entire** UNSC which believes that Syria has committed the crimes Solon repeats, it is some members with an admitted **vested interest in toppling the Syrian government**.

The Chemical Card

In an attempt to validate the White Helmets, and delegitimize those who question them, The Guardian article presented **as fact claims** that the Syrian government used chemical weapons against its people in Khan Sheikhoun in April 2017, that the White Helmets provided valuable documentation to the fact, and stated that Beeley and myself were **some of the “most vocal sceptics”** of the official narrative.

Amusingly, according to the article on the Qatari-owned channel, Al Jazeera, which The Guardian provided to back up their assertion of the Syrian government’s culpability (instead of providing the [September 2017 UN report](#), itself questionable, and a much longer read for Solon), (emphasis added):

“All evidence available leads the Commission to conclude that there are reasonable grounds **to believe** Syrian forces dropped an aerial bomb dispersing sarin in Khan Sheikhoun.”

Reasonable grounds to believe is not exactly a confirmation of evidence, it’s **just a belief**.

The same article noted the investigators had not been to Syria and “based their findings on photographs of bomb remnants, satellite imagery and witness testimony.”

Witness testimony from an al-Qaeda-dominated area? Very credible. The White Helmet leader in Khan Sheikhoun, **Mustafa al-Haj Yusef**, is an extremist showing allegiance to the actions of al-Qaeda. As [Vanessa Beeley wrote](#):

“Yusef has called for the shelling of civilians, the execution of anyone not fasting during Ramadan, the murder of anyone considered a Shabiha, the killing of the SAA and the looting of their property. ...He clearly supports both Nusra Front, an internationally recognised terrorist group, and Ahrar Al Sham...Yusef is far from being neutral, impartial or humanitarian.”

The initial [analysis](#) (of an April 2017 White House statement on Khan Sheikhoun) by Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology, and National Security Policy Massachusetts Institute of Technology, **Theodore Postol**, found (emphasis added):

“I believe it can be shown, without doubt, that the document **does not provide any evidence whatsoever** that the US government has concrete knowledge that the government of Syria was the source of the chemical attack in Khan Shaykhun, Syria at roughly 6 to 7 a.m. on April 4, 2017.

Postol’s analysis concludes that the alleged evidence

“points to **an attack that was executed by individuals on the ground, not from an aircraft**, on the morning of April 4,” and notes that “the report contains **absolutely no evidence** that this attack was the result of a munition being dropped from an aircraft.”

Investigative journalist **Seymour Hersh** also looked at the official accusations, noting that

claims made by MSF contradicted the official accusation of the Syrian government bombing the area with sarin. [Hersh wrote](#) (emphasis added):

“A team from Médecins Sans Frontières, treating victims from Khan Sheikhoun at a clinic 60 miles to the north, reported that ‘eight patients showed symptoms – including constricted pupils, muscle spasms and involuntary defecation – which are consistent with exposure to a neurotoxic agent such as sarin gas or similar compounds.’ **MSF also visited other hospitals that had received victims and found that patients there ‘smelled of bleach, suggesting that they had been exposed to chlorine.’** In other words, evidence suggested that there was **more than one chemical responsible for the symptoms observed**, which would **not have been the case if the Syrian Air Force – as opposition activists insisted – had dropped a sarin bomb**, which has no percussive or ignition power to trigger secondary explosions. The range of symptoms is, however, consistent with the release of a mixture of chemicals, including chlorine and the organophosphates used in many fertilizers, which can cause neurotoxic effects similar to those of sarin.”

The second article to which Solon linked was a NY Times [article](#) which called the report a “politically independent investigation”. This should make readers pause to guffaw, as the investigating mechanism includes the [questionably-funded OPCW](#), and among those which the investigators interviewed were al-Qaeda’s rescuers.

Regarding the report, **Professor Marcello Ferrada de Noli** (*founder and chairman of [Swedish Professors and Doctors for Human Rights](#)*) in November 2017, [refuted it](#) as “inaccurate” and “politically biased”. Points he made included (emphasis added):

-“The same JIM authors acknowledge that **rebels in Khan Shaykhun have however destroyed evidence by filling the purported impact “crater” with concrete**. Why the “rebels” have done that – and what consequences that sabotage would have for the investigation of facts is not even considered by the panel.”

-“By acknowledging that **Khan Shaykhun was then under control of al-Nusra, the JIM report exhibits yet another methodological contradiction**: That would mean that al-Nusra and its jihadists allies, by having control of the area, they were **also in control of the ‘official’ information delivered from Khan Shaykhun on the alleged incident**. This would imperatively call for a questioning of the reliability/credibility (bias) of main sources that the panel used for its allegations.”

Twitter user @Syricide picked up on one of the JIM’s most alarming professed *irregularity*, [tweeting](#):



Syricide
@Syricide

Following

Fifty seven "patients" arrived at five hospitals for treatment BEFORE the incident occurred in KhanSheikoun.

#NoJoke #Hoax #FalseFlag

• Certain irregularities were observed in elements of information analysed. For example, several hospitals appeared to start admitting casualties of the attack between 0640 and 0645 hours. The Mechanism received the medical records of 247 patients from Khan Shaykhun who were admitted to various health-care facilities, including those of survivors and a number of victims who died from exposure to a

chemical agent. The admission times of the records range between 0600 and 1600 hours. Analysis of the aforementioned medical records revealed that in 57 cases, patients were admitted in five hospitals before the incident in Khan Shaykhun (at 0600, 0620 and 0640 hours). In 10 such cases, patients appear to have been admitted to a hospital 125 km away from Khan Shaykhun at 0700 hours while another 42 patients appear to have been admitted to a hospital 30 km away at 0700 hours. The Mechanism did not investigate these discrepancies and cannot determine whether they are linked to any possible staging scenario, or to poor record-keeping in chaotic conditions.

2:06 PM - 29 Oct 2017

Even the Nation in April 2017 [ran a piece](#) stressing the need for actual investigation into the chemical weapons claims, citing the research of Postol, as well noting the following (emphasis added):

“**Philip Girdali**, a former CIA case officer and Army intelligence officer, [told radio host Scott Horton on April 6](#) that he was “hearing from sources on the ground in the Middle East, people who are intimately familiar with the intelligence that is available, who are saying the essential narrative we are hearing about the Syrians and Russians using chemical weapons **is a sham.**”

Girdali also noted that ‘people both the agency [CIA] and in the military who are aware of the intelligence are freaking out about this because essentially **Trump completely misrepresented’ what had taken place in Khan Sheikhun**. Girdali reports that his sources in the military and the intelligence community “are astonished by how this is being played by the administration and by the US media.”

The same article included the words of the former UK ambassador to Syria, **Peter Ford**, who [noted](#):

“It defies belief that he would bring this all on his head for no military advantage.” Ford said he believes the accusations against Syria are “simply not plausible.”

So, in fact, no, some of the most vocal and informed sceptics were neither Beeley nor myself, but MIT Professor Emeritus Theodore Postol, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, former UK ambassador Peter Ford, and former CIA and Army intelligence officer Philip Girdali, not exactly “fringe” voices.

Investigative journalist **Robert Parry** in April 2017 [wrote of](#) a NY Times deflection tactic

(one which Solon employed), emphasis added:

“Rather than deal with the difficulty of assessing what happened in Khan Sheikhoun, **which is controlled by Al Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate and where information therefore should be regarded as highly suspect**, Rutenberg simply assessed that the conventional wisdom in the West must be correct.

To discredit any doubters, Rutenberg **associated them with one of the wackier conspiracy theories of radio personality Alex Jones**, another version of the Times’ recent troubling reliance on McCarthyistic logical fallacies, not only **applying guilt by association** but refuting reasonable skepticism by tying it to someone who in an entirely different context expressed unreasonable skepticism.”

That sounds familiar. Solon wrote:

“Beeley frequently [criticises the White Helmets](#) in her role as editor of the website 21st Century Wire, set up by Patrick Henningsen, who is also an editor at Infowars.com.”

Infowars is Alex Jones’ site, and Henningsen is for many years no longer affiliated.

Solon followed this with another non sequitur argument about Beeley and the US Peace Council meeting with the Syrian president in 2016, a point **irrelevant either to the issue of the White Helmets or the alleged chemical attacks**. But irrelevance is what corporate media do best these days.

The Guardian *story*-writer has done literally zero investigative research into the fallacies she presents as fact in her article.

Integrity-Devoid Sources Solon Cited

In addition to those I’ve already mentioned, it is quite interesting to note some of the other sources Solon quoted to fluff her *story*:

-**Scott Lucas**, whose allegiance to Imperialists is evident from his [twitter feed](#), a textbook Russophobe, Iranophobe. Lucas relied on the words of terrorist-supporter, Mustafa al-Haj Youssef, for his [August article](#) on the White Helmets (the one Solon seemingly plagiarized from). Solon relied on Lucas’ smears to dismiss the work and detract from the integrity of those Solon attacked. That, and being a token professor to include in attempt at legitimacy, was Lucas’ sole function in the Guardian *story*.

-**Amnesty International**, the so-called human rights group which as **Tony Cartalucci** [outlined in August 2012](#), is “US State Department Propaganda”, and does indeed receive money from governments and corporate-financier interests, including “convicted financial criminal” George Soros’ Open Society.

It’s not just “conspiracy theorists” like Cartalucci who have written on Amnesty’s dark side. **Ann Wright**, a 29-year U.S. Army/Army Reserve Colonel and a 16-year U.S. Diplomat serving in numerous countries, including Afghanistan, who “resigned in 2003 in opposition to the Iraq war,” and “returned to Afghanistan in 2007 and 2010 on fact-finding missions,”

has as well. Her co-author was **Coleen Rowley**, “a FBI special agent for almost 24 years, legal counsel to the FBI Field Office in Minneapolis from 1990 to 2003, and a whistleblower “on some of the FBI’s pre-9/11 failures.” Together, in June 2012, they [wrote about](#) “Amnesty’s Shilling for US Wars”.

Professor of international law, **Francis Boyle**, who himself was a member of the US board of Amnesty, wrote of the group’s role in shilling for war. In October 2012, [he wrote](#) of Amnesty’s war mongering regarding Iraq—endorsing the dead incubator babies story told by the Kuwaiti ambassador’s daughter—and his own attempts to inform Amnesty “that this report should not be published because it was inaccurate.” He noted:

“That genocidal war waged by the United States, the United Kingdom and France, inter alia, during the months of January and February 1991, killed at a minimum 200,000 Iraqis, half of whom were civilians. Amnesty International shall always have the blood of the Iraqi People on its hands!”

Boyle’s parting words included:

“...based upon my over sixteen years of experience having dealt with AI/London and AIUSA at the highest levels, it is clear to me that both organizations manifest a consistent pattern and practice of following the lines of the foreign policies of the United States, Britain, and Israel. ...Effectively, Amnesty International and AIUSA function as tools for the imperialist, colonial and genocidal policies of the United States, Britain, and Israel.”

-**Eliot Higgins**, of whom award-winning investigative journalist **Gareth Porter** [wrote](#):

“Eliot Higgins is a **non-resident fellow of the militantly anti-Russian, State Department-funded Atlantic Council**, and has **no technical expertise on munitions.**”

British journalist **Graham Phillips** [wrote](#) in February 2016 on Eliot Higgins. Answering his question on who is Eliot Higgins, Phillips wrote:

“He **never finished college**, dropping out of the [Southampton Institute of Higher Education](#). When asked...what he studied at university, his answer was, **‘Media...I think.’** ...Higgins has always been completely [open about his lack of expertise.](#)”

The Guardian’s Russia Obsession

By now it should be clear that the intent of Solon’s December 18th *story* was not to address the manifold questions (facts) about the White Helmets’ ties to (inclusion of) terrorists in Syria, nor to question the *heroic volunteers’* obscene amount of funding from Western sources very keen to see Syria destabilized and its government replaced.

Rather, the intent was to whitewash this rescue group, and to demonize those of us

highlighted, and especially to insert more Russophobia (although Russia's military intervention in Syria is legal, unlike that of the US-led coalition, of which Solon's UK is a part).

Since our last early October communication until the long-awaited publishing of her slander-filled piece, Solon produced (or co-produced) 24 stories for the Guardian, nine of which were **blame-Russia!** sort of stories, including such lexicon as "Russian operatives", "Russian interference", "Russian trolls", "Russian propagandists", and "Russian bots.

Is **Baroness Cox**, of the UK House of Lords, who [recently spoke](#) in support of Russia's (invited) intervention in Syria, a "conspiracy theorist", a Russian operative" or Kremlin-funded? She said (emphasis added):

"And the fourth point that I would like to make particularly to you is the **very real appreciation that is expressed by everyone in Syria of the support by Russia** to help get rid of ISIS [Daesh] and get rid of all the other Islamist religious groups."

Cox, who went to Syria, is probably *not* a Kremlin or Assad agent. She probably just **listened to the voices of Syrians in Syria**, like the rest of [us Russian propagandists](#) who have bothered to go (repeatedly) to Syria and speak with Syrian civilians.

This is the first part of a longer article. Part II is forthcoming.

Eva Bartlett is a freelance journalist and rights activist with extensive experience in the Gaza Strip and Syria. Her writings can be found on her blog, [In Gaza](#).

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