

The Chemical Weapons Pretext for War on Syria: A Pack of Lies

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In the wake of having its illegal domestic surveillance dragnet exposed, laying bare (yet again) the utter duplicity and criminality of the U.S. ruling class, Washington is once again digging deep to conjure up a pretext for yet another war of aggression in the Middle East.

Using the tired menace of weapons of mass destruction, the White House Thursday [claimed](#) with “high confidence” that the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad had used chemical weapons, specifically the nerve agent sarin, against rebel fighters.

Washington’s announcement of “credible evidence” of chemical weapons use by Syrian forces, coming despite a dearth of actual hard evidence revealed, is now being used as the justification for providing direct U.S. military aid to the Syrian rebels.

The decision to wade further into the Syrian morass, however, came well before the supposed crossing of President Obama’s “red line.”

As the *Washington Post* [reported](#), “the determination to send weapons had been made weeks ago.” Moreover, it has long been known that the [CIA was overseeing the arming of opposition groups inside Syria](#). The debate in Washington over Syria has thus really been over the degree and overtness of U.S. military intervention. And while the typical Republican hawks (John McCain and Lindsey Graham) have used the latest chemical weapons scare to resume the calls for a “no-fly zone,” prominent Democrats continue to come around to [supporting a “no-fly zone”](#) as well. But then again, American politics has long stopped at water’s edge.

With such bipartisan war drums beating louder, it’s little surprise to learn that the Pentagon is working on plans for establishing a “limited no-fly zone” in order to carve out a buffer zone of up to 25 miles along the Jordan-Syria border.

This “no-fly zone,” the *Wall Street Journal* [reports](#), would “be enforced using aircraft flown from Jordanian bases and flying inside the kingdom.” And on cue, the Pentagon has confirmed that it will indeed be keeping a contingent of [F-16s and Patriot missiles in Jordan](#) following scheduled war games there next week. (NATO already has Patriot missile batteries stationed along the Turkey-Syria border.)

The very notion of a “limited no-fly zone,” though, stands as but the latest addition to Washington’s growing newspeak. One may add it to the likes of “collateral damage,” “surgical strikes,” and “protecting civilians.” Indeed, as former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates [remarked](#) prior to the NATO assault on Libya in 2011, “Let’s just call a spade a spade. A no-fly zone begins with an attack on Libya to destroy the air defenses. That’s the way you

do a no-fly zone.” Syria would be no different.

Of course, the latest impetus used for directly arming the Syrian rebels and reviving the talk of bombing the country—the supposed crossing of President Obama’s “red line” on chemical weapons—is on its very face tenuous, at best.

According to *Foreign Policy*’s “The Cable” [blog](#), despite their “high confidence,” American intelligence officials have still not been able to determine a chain of custody for the blood samples supplied by Syrian rebels that reportedly tested positive for sarin. That is, they have not been able to establish who exactly handled the principal piece of evidence establishing “proof” of chemical weapons use by the regime. A rather remarkable admission given that it took two full weeks for the blood samples to reach Western intelligence agencies from rebel hands.

Faced with such flimsy evidence from U.S. officials, Yuri Ushakov, senior foreign policy adviser to Russian President Vladimir Putin, [commented](#) that, “what was presented to us by the Americans does not look convincing.”

“It would be hard even to call them facts,” Ushakov added.

Indeed, as *McClatchy* [reported](#), independent chemical weapons experts maintain that “they’ve yet to see the telltale signs of a sarin gas attack, despite months of scrutiny.”

“Ultimately, without more information, we are left with the need to trust the integrity of the U.S. intelligence community in arriving at its ‘high confidence’ judgment,” Greg Thielmann, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Arms Control Association told *McClatchy*.

And what a leap of faith to place one’s trust in the integrity of the U.S. intelligence community! After all, that would be the very same intelligence community which claimed it a “slam dunk” that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction; the very same intelligence apparatus now snooping on the communications of virtually every American.

Given such an abundant recent history of brazen illegality from Washington, it’s no wonder the American public simply isn’t buying another war in the Middle East. In fact, just 15 percent in a recent [NBC/Wall Street Journal poll](#) favor U.S. military intervention into Syria. Only 11 percent favor arming the opposition.

Yet, in a revealing look into the anti-democratic impulse of the U.S. ruling elite who now cynically champion democracy in Syria, former President Bill Clinton publicly advised President Obama last week to disregard the firm public opposition to U.S. military intervention into Syria. As Clinton [remarked](#), “any president risks looking like ‘a total fool’ if they listen too closely to opinion polls.”

And thus not wanting to look a fool, President Obama has set the American war machine on the grinding path toward deeper intervention into the Syrian conflict. The threat of a global confrontation ensnaring the likes of Iran and global powers Russia and China is evidently but the price of saving face. Or as former Obama State Department official Anne-Marie Slaughter more tactfully [put it](#), it’s but the price of saving “U.S. credibility.”

The American working class, let alone working people globally, have nothing to gain from saving Washington’s credibility and satiating its imperial blood lust. In fact, those at real risk of looking like fools are those still listening to the deceitful claims of the war-hungry

elite. For amid deepening internal economic and political crises, all the American ruling class has on offer is but further imperial aggression to be sold on little more than a pack of lies.

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