

The Novichok Nerve Agent Story Is Indeed Another Iraqi WMD Scam

By [Craig Murray](#)

Global Research, March 15, 2018

[Craig Murray](#) 14 March 2018

Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#),
[Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

*As recently as 2016 **Dr Robin Black**, Head of the Detection Laboratory at the UK's only chemical weapons facility at Porton Down, a former colleague of **Dr David Kelly**, published in an extremely prestigious scientific journal that the evidence for the existence of Novichoks was scant and their composition unknown.*

In recent years, there has been much speculation that a fourth generation of nerve agents, 'Novichoks' (newcomer), was developed in Russia, beginning in the 1970s as part of the 'Foliant' programme, with the aim of finding agents that would compromise defensive countermeasures. Information on these compounds has been sparse in the public domain, mostly originating from a dissident Russian military chemist, Vil Mirzayanov. No independent confirmation of the structures or the properties of such compounds has been published. (Black, 2016)

Yet now, the British Government is claiming to be able instantly to identify a substance which its only biological weapons research centre has never seen before and was unsure of its existence. Worse, it claims to be able not only to identify it, but to pinpoint its origin. Given Dr Black's publication, it is plain that claim cannot be true.

The world's international chemical weapons experts share Dr Black's opinion. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is a UN body based in the Hague. In 2013 this was the report of its Scientific Advisory Board, which included US, French, German and Russian government representatives and on which Dr Black was the UK representative:

[The SAB] emphasised that the definition of toxic chemicals in the Convention would cover all potential candidate chemicals that might be utilised as chemical weapons. Regarding new toxic chemicals not listed in the Annex on Chemicals but which may nevertheless pose a risk to the Convention, the SAB makes reference to "Novichoks". The name "Novichok" is used in a publication of a former Soviet scientist who reported investigating a new class of nerve agents suitable for use as binary chemical weapons. The SAB states that it has insufficient information to comment on the existence or properties of "Novichoks". (OPCW, 2013)

Indeed the OPCW was so sceptical of the viability of "novichoks" that it decided - with US and UK agreement - not to add them nor their alleged precursors to its banned list. In short,

the scientific community broadly accepts Mirzayanov was working on “novichoks” but doubts he succeeded.

Given that the OPCW has taken the view the evidence for the existence of “Novichoks” is dubious, if the UK actually has a sample of one it is extremely important the UK presents that sample to the OPCW. Indeed the UK has a binding treaty obligation to present that sample to OPCW. Russia has – unreported by the corporate media – entered a demand at the OPCW that Britain submit a sample of the Salisbury material for international analysis.

Yet Britain refuses to submit it to the OPCW.

Why?

A second part of May’s accusation is that “Novichoks” could only be made in certain military installations. But that is also demonstrably untrue. If they exist at all, Novichoks were allegedly designed to be able to be made at bench level in any commercial chemical facility – that was a major point of them. The only real evidence for the existence of Novichoks was the testimony of the ex-Soviet scientist Mizayanov. And this is what Mirzayanov actually wrote.

One should be mindful that the chemical components or precursors of A-232 or its binary version novichok-5 are ordinary organophosphates that can be made at commercial chemical companies that manufacture such products as fertilizers and pesticides.

It is a scientific impossibility for Porton Down to have been able to test for Russian novichoks if they have never possessed a Russian sample to compare them to. They can analyse a sample as conforming to a Mirzayanov formula, but as he published those to the world twenty years ago, that is no proof of Russian origin. If Porton Down can synthesise it, so can many others, not just the Russians.

And finally – Mirzayanov is an Uzbek name and the novichok programme, assuming it existed, was in the Soviet Union but far away from modern Russia, at Nukus in modern Uzbekistan. I have visited the Nukus chemical weapons site myself. It was dismantled and made safe and all the stocks destroyed and the equipment removed by the American government, as I recall finishing while I was Ambassador there. There has in fact never been any evidence that any “novichok” ever existed in Russia itself.

To summarise:

- 1) Porton Down has acknowledged in publications it has never seen any Russian “novichoks”. The UK government has absolutely no “fingerprint” information such as impurities that can safely attribute this substance to Russia.
- 2) Until now, neither Porton Down nor the world’s experts at the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) were convinced “Novichoks” even exist.
- 3) The UK is refusing to provide a sample to the OPCW.
- 4) “Novichoks” were specifically designed to be able to be manufactured from common ingredients on any scientific bench. The Americans dismantled and studied the facility that

allegedly developed them. It is completely untrue only the Russians could make them, if anybody can.

5) The “Novichok” programme was in Uzbekistan not in Russia. Its legacy was inherited by the Americans during their alliance with Karimov, not by the Russians.

With a great many thanks to sources who cannot be named at this moment.

*

Sources

Robin Black. (2016) Development, Historical Use and Properties of Chemical Warfare Agents. Royal Society of Chemistry

OPCW: Report of the Scientific Advisory Board on developments in science and technology for the Third Review Conference 27 March 2013

Vil S. Mirzayanov, “Dismantling the Soviet/Russian Chemical Weapons Complex: An Insider’s View,” in Amy E. Smithson, Dr. Vil S. Mirzayanov, Gen Roland Lajoie, and Michael Krepon, Chemical Weapons Disarmament in Russia: Problems and Prospects, Stimson Report No. 17, October 1995, p. 21.

The original source of this article is [Craig Murray](#)
Copyright © [Craig Murray](#), [Craig Murray](#), 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Craig Murray](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca