

Two Criminal Accusations Against Russia. The Skripal Affair and Flight MH 17

Global Research News Hour episode 214

By [Michael Welch](#) and [John Helmer](#)
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Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)
Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#),
[History](#), [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#),
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"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...

If Porton Down can synthesise it, so can many others, not just the Russians." - **Former Ambassador Craig Murray** (March 14, 2018) [1]

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News of an apparent assassination attempt of a former Russian double agent in Salisbury, England early in March has added fuel to the fire heating up a new cold war between Russia and the West. [2]

In a rare show of solidarity, the U.S., Germany, and France have all expressed unity in their position that the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, involving a military-grade nerve agent, was 'likely' attributable to Russia.[3]

While the Russian government has denied responsibility, the government of Theresa May has responded to the incident by expelling 23 Russian diplomats, the largest such expulsion since the cold war.[4]

Doubts however have been raised about the official story. One of the more notable skeptics, the former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan Craig Murray, has pointed out that the UK's only chemical weapons facility Porton Down ([coincidentally only 8 miles from the scene of the Skripal poisoning](#)) acknowledged in publications that it has never seen samples of the 'Novichok' class of nerve agent such as what was reportedly used to poison Skripal. [5]

As Murray makes clear in a recent article, neither Porton Down, nor the world experts at the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) were even convinced of the existence of Novichoks. [6]

Moreover, there is simply no mechanism by which the agent in question could have been identified as Russian. Incidentally, the facility that had been working on the Novichoks during the Soviet era was located at Nukus in modern Uzbekistan, not Russia. [7]

Yet, the UK PM jumped to conclusions about the incident with an alacrity worthy of an Olympic level athlete!

Russian officials are treating the ongoing and intensifying allegations as a provocation, added to a string of such accusations over the last four years. These include the 2014 annexation by Russia of Crimea, the downing of Flight MH17 over Eastern Ukraine in the summer of that year, interference in the U.S. and French national elections, and collaboration with Syrian 'dictator' Bashar al Assad in the bombing of civilians in Aleppo and East Ghoutta. [8]

With the Skripal poisoning saga continuing to dominate international headlines, this week's Global Research News Hour attempts to probe the justification for and context of the West's latest propaganda push against the world's largest nation.

In the first half hour, we hear from Moscow based journalist and author **John Helmer** about his take on the poisoning of former Russian double-agent **Sergei Skripal**, his evaluation of the available evidence pointing to a professional assassination attempt by Russia, his assessment of the political response to the incident, and his opinion of the significance of a recent Court ruling, [published on his website](#), summarizing the blood sampling and other evidence in the case.

In the second half hour, we continue to pursue the 'Get Russia' theme with a never before aired interview with **Kees Van Der Pijl** from October of 2017. Author of a recently released book on MH 17, Van Der Pijl is convinced that the official story of the downing of the flight is impossible. In this half hour conversation, he provides some of the geopolitical context of the incident and speaks to the unlikelihood of political or media breakthroughs regardless of the evidence.

***John Helmer** is the longest continuously serving foreign correspondent in Russia, A former professor of political science, sociology and journalism and former staffer with the Carter Administration, Helmer is a frequent commenter on topics related to Russia. His site, 'Dances with Bears' can be found at johnhelmer.net.*

***Kees Van Der Pijl** is a Professor Emeritus of International Relations at the University of Sussex and former director of the Centre for Global Political economy. He is currently active with the Dutch anti-fascist resistance, having served as its president. In 2017 he authored the book, [Flight MH17, Ukraine and the new Cold War](#).*

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RIOT RADIO, the visual radio station based out of Durham College in Oshawa, Ontario has begun airing the Global Research News Hour on an occasional basis. Tune in at dcstudentsinc.ca/services/riot-radio/

Notes:

1. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-novichok-nerve-agent-story-is-indeed-another-iraqi-wmd-scam/5632217>
2. Anushka Asthana et al. (March 13, 2018) 'Russian spy poisoning: Theresa May issues ultimatum to Moscow', The Guardian; <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/12/russia-highly-likely-to-be-behind-poisoning-of-spy-says-theresa-may>
3. Peter Walker and Andrew Roth (March 15, 2018), 'UK, US, Germany and France unite to condemn spy attack'; <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/15/salisbury-poisoning-uk-us-germany-and-france-issue-joint-statement>
4. Heather Stewart et. al (March 14, 2018), 'Russia threatens retaliation after Britain expels 23 diplomats', The Guardian; <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/14/may-expels-23-russian-diplomats-response-spy-poisoning>
5. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-novichok-nerve-agent-story-is-indeed-another-iraqi-wmd-scam/5632217>
6. ibid
7. ibid
8. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/936043/russia-skripal-attack-war-sergei-lavrov-theresa-may-donald-trump>

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