

The Syrian Chemical Weapons Nexus: Verdict First, Evidence Later

How the Australian Media Misrepresent Geopolitical Events

By [James O'Neill](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#),
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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

“Let the jury consider their verdict”, the King said, for about the twentieth time that day. “No, no,” said the Queen. Sentence first – verdict afterward.” – Charles Dodgson ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.’

The pictures of dead and dying civilians, including children, their suffering allegedly caused by a Syrian/Russian chemical warfare attack, has once again caused the western media to renew their demands for the removal of Syrian President Bashar al Assad.

In the Sydney Morning Herald of 6 April 2017 the SMH’s chief Washington correspondent Paul McGeogh, refers to Trump meeting with Egyptian President el-Sisi and a parallel declaration by the US UN Ambassador Nikki Haley that the removal of Assad was no longer a US priority. These two incidents, he argues, sent a signal to Damascus that the Syrian government had a licence to do as it pleased.



Although McGeogh did not acknowledge it, that thesis was exactly the same as that being argued by arch neocons Senators Lindsay Graham and John McCain. The latter was recently described in a SMH editorial as ‘widely respected.’ Which is one measure of the parallel universe the SMH occupies these days.

McGeogh goes on to say, “we’ve been here before,” referring to the 2013 poison gas attack in Ghouta, Syria. That was blamed on the Assad government by the western media at the time. The fact that the allegations were later discredited.

The rush to judgment by McGeogh and his counterparts elsewhere in the mainstream media overlooks a number of alternative explanations that are at least worth considering, especially when actual hard evidence is in such short supply.

One such scenario is that the Syrian air force bombed a factory that was storing chemical weapons for use by one or more of the multiple terrorist groups operating in the area.

The fact that the terrorist groups have used such weapons in the past and had strong motives to use them again is entirely missing from the western media narrative. The stockpile of chemical weapons at Khan Sheikhoun had previously been shipped to fellow terrorists operating in Iraq, as confirmed by the [Iraqi government](#).

It is also known that three days before the tragedy at Khan Sheikhoun a convoy of TOW missiles, gas masks for up to 2000 persons and chemical warfare suits from Saudi Arabian stockpiles left Hatay, Turkey for Hama, Syria where al Nusra are waging a major battle for control. This raises obvious questions about the intended use of the gas masks and chemical warfare suits by the terrorist groups. This information, released by the Russians before the Khan Sheikhoun tragedy, was ignored by the western media at the time and certainly does not appear now.

To disclose that information would raise wider questions, such as the role of Saudi Arabia and others in the Gulf region in supplying and financing the terrorist activity in Syria and Iraq. Certainly no hint of criticism of Saudi Arabia escapes the lips of Australian government spokespersons from PM Malcolm Turnbull down. This is also the case with the illegal war being waged on Yemen by the US and Saudi Arabia.

In all the fury mounted against the Assad government for their alleged conduct, no one has raised a single plausible reason why the Syrian government would risk such international condemnation for so little military benefit.

Assad is not a fool and he would know that such an attack would provide ammunition for the very powerful neocon element in the US for who massive civilian casualties are a matter of indifference when committed by their side, as they repeatedly demonstrate, but are ever willing to use tragedy whether at their own hand or by others, in pursuit of their geopolitical goals.

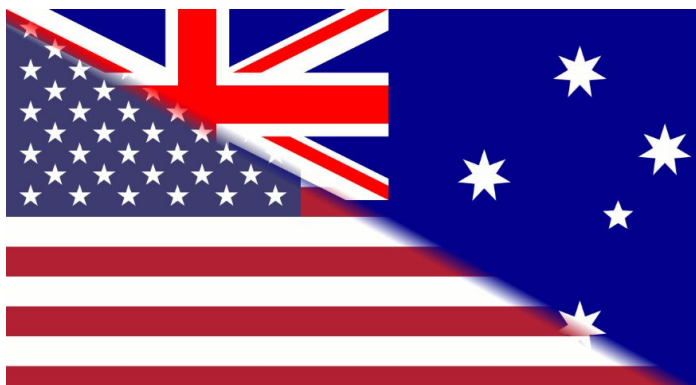
The very astute analyst who writes under the nom de plume ‘The Saker’ [expresses](#) it this way:

“The Neocons, apparently backed by the CIA and the Pentagon, want to go at it solo: just shoot up all of Syria OK Corral style and they seem to be convinced that they can somehow scare the Russians, the Iranians and the Syrians into submission. If so, then they are both stupid and ignorant.”

Syria does not exist in geopolitical isolation despite the best attempts of McGeogh et al to make it appear so. In 2007 General Wesley Clark revealed previously secret US plans to

topple seven Middle East and North African countries in a five year period.

Those seven countries make revealing reading in the light of recent events: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Iran.



Five of the seven have been or are currently being attacked, occupied, and/or destroyed by the US and its allies, including Australia. During the recent US Presidential campaign both Trump and Clinton made no secret of their intense dislike of Iran. For a number of reasons outside the scope of this article Iran is unlikely to be attacked directly. It is however, the victim of asymmetrical warfare through sanctions, assassinations and support for the terrorist organisation MEK.

Lebanon will probably be left to the Israelis who have attacked it on multiple occasions and occupied the southern portion for a nearly two-decade period.

Israel also plays an important role in the attack on Syria both directly through the bombing of Syrian Army positions, and also by providing medical aid to wounded ISIS fighters in military hospitals in the Golan Heights.

The Syrian Golan Heights themselves have been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. They remain, in defiance of UN resolutions and international law, with the support of the US and Australia. Their reasons for the continued occupation of Golan are multiple, including the fulfillment of part of the Yinon Plan (O. Yinon Directions Kivunim Magazine February 1982). That plan called for the breakup into 'statelets' of Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon and the dissolution of Jordan.

Recent discoveries of huge reserves of oil and gas in the Golan Heights are another reason for staying. Genie Energy, a company based in Newark New Jersey, is carrying out the exploitation of those resources. Its strategic advisory board includes such luminaries as Dick Cheney (former US vice-president), James Woolsey (former director of the CIA), Larry Summers (former US treasury Secretary), Bill Richardson (former US energy Secretary) and Rupert Murdoch (media baron).

The latter's role in Genie Energy is probably one of the reasons that criticism of Israeli policies rarely blemishes the pages of News Corp publications.

The other driving force of US policy in Syria dates from the latter's refusal to allow transit of a pipeline for Qatari gas to Europe. The US plan behind the pipeline was to use Qatari gas to wean Europeans off their reliance on Russian gas, thereby undermining the Russian economy.

None of this geopolitical context is given to readers of the mainstream media. Their reporters, editors and our politicians find it much easier to regurgitate the clichéd and self-

serving memes that flow from Washington and London.

The reporting of the tragedy from Syria is but the latest illustration of an all too common phenomenon: a pre-determined verdict on little or no evidence.

James O'Neill, an Australian-based Barrister at Law, exclusively for the online magazine ["New Eastern Outlook"](#).

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