

Why the Latest Claims Against Assad are a Pack of Lies

By [Daniel Margrain](#)

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

With a critical public increasingly turning to social media to scrutinize the claims of the mainstream as well as the credibility of the assertions made by the various NGOs and government-funded human rights organisations, it's arguably becoming more difficult for the corporate press to pass their propaganda off as legitimate news.

This is particularly the case during periods when the establishment pushes for military conflicts. One salutary lesson from the Iraq debacle, is that the public appear not to be so readily fooled. Or are they?

It's a measure of the extent to which the mass media barely stray from their paymasters tune, that president Trump, [with near-unanimous journalistic support](#), was able to launch an illegal missile strike on Syria on April 7, 2017. Cathy Newman on yesterday evenings [Channel 4 News](#) (April 10, 2017) stated that the attack on the al-Shayrat airbase was in "retaliation" for an alleged sarin gas attack by president Assad. However, for the reasons outlined below, such a scenario seems highly unlikely.

New York Times reporter, Michael B Gordon, who co-authored that papers infamous fake [aluminum tube story](#) of September 8, 2002 as part of the media's propaganda offensive leading up to the 2003 U.S-led Iraq invasion, published (along with co-author Anne Barnard), the latest chemical weapons [fake news story](#) intended to fit with the establishment narrative on Syria.

Lack of skepticism

Showing no skepticism that the Syrian military was responsible for intentionally deploying poison gas, the authors cited the widely discredited \$100m-funded terrorist-enablers, the [White Helmets](#), as the basis for their story. Meanwhile, the doyen of neocon drum-beating war propaganda in Britain, Jonathan Freedland of the *Guardian*, [wrote](#) a day after the alleged attack:

"We almost certainly know who did it. Every sign points to the regime of Bashar al-Assad." What these 'signs' are were not specified in the article.

Even the usually cautious *Guardian* journalist George Monbiot appears to be eager for military action. On Twitter (April 7, 2017) Monbiot [claimed](#):

“We can be 99% sure the chemical weapons attack came from Syrian govt.”

Three days later, media analysts Media Lens challenged Monbiot by citing the views of former UN weapons inspectors, Hans Blix and Scott Ritter, both of whom contradicted Monbiot’s assertion.

“What do you know that [Hans Blix](#) and [Scott Ritter](#) don’t know?”, [inquired the analysts](#). Monbiot failed to reply.

Apparently it hadn’t occurred to these, and practically all the other mainstream journalists (with the notable exception of [Peter Osborne](#) and [Peter Hitchens](#)), that Assad’s motive for undertaking such an attack was weak. As investigative reporter Robert Parry, who broke many of the Iran-Contra stories, [argued](#):

“Since Assad’s forces have gained a decisive upper-hand over the rebels, why would he risk stirring up international outrage at this juncture? On the other hand, the desperate rebels might view the horrific scenes from the chemical-weapons deployment as a last-minute game-changer.”

A second major inconsistency in the official narrative are the contradictory claims relating to the sarin issue. Charles Shoebridge [referred](#) to a *Guardian* article that claims sarin was used, but he counters the claim by stating: “Yet, a rescuer tells its reporter “we could smell it 500m away”. The intelligence and terrorism expert was quick to point out that sarin is odorless (unless contaminated). As blogger Mark J Doran [astutely remarked](#):

“Now, who is going be stuck with lousy, impure sarin? A nation state or a terrorist group?”

Dodgy ‘doctor’



Then there has been the willingness of the media to cite what is clearly an incredulous source, ‘British doctor’, Shajul Islam. Despite having been struck off the British medical register for misconduct in March 2016, the media have quoted or shown Islam in their reports where he [has been depicted as a key witness](#) to the alleged gas attack and hence helped augment the unsubstantiated media narrative. In 2012 Shajul Islam was charged with terror offences in a British court.

Peter Hitchens [takes up the story](#):

“He was accused of imprisoning John Cantlie, a British photographer, and a Dutchman, Jeroen Oerlemans. Both men were held by a militant group in Syria and both were wounded when they tried to escape. Shajul Islam, it was alleged, was among their captors. Shajul Islam’s trial collapsed in 2013, when it was revealed that Mr Cantlie had been abducted once again, and could not give evidence.

Mr Oerlemans refused to give evidence for fear that it would further endanger

Mr Cantlie. Mr Oerlemans has since been killed in Libya. So the supposedly benevolent medical man at the scene of the alleged atrocity turns out to be a struck-off doctor who was once put on trial for kidnapping.”

Fourth, there is the question as to why the U.S would launch a military strike in the knowledge that it would risk further sarin leaks into the atmosphere. As the writer and musician, Gilad Atzmon, [argues](#):

“It doesn’t take a military analyst to grasp that the American attack on a remote Syrian airfield contradicts every possible military rationale. If America really believed that Assad possessed a WMD stockpile and kept it in al-Shayrat airbase, launching a missile attack that could lead to a release of lethal agents into the air would be the last thing it would do. If America was determined to ‘neutralise’ Assad’s alleged ‘WMD ability’ it would deploy special forces or diplomacy. No one defuses WMD with explosives, bombs or cruise missiles. It is simply unheard of.”

Atzmon adds:

“The first concern that comes to mind is why do you need a saxophonist to deliver the truth every military expert understands very well? Can’t the New York Times or the Guardian reach the same obvious conclusion? It’s obvious enough that if Assad didn’t use WMD when he was losing the war, it would make no sense for him to use it now when a victory is within reach.”

Logical explanation

✘ A far more logical explanation, given the location, is that chemicals were released into the air by Salafist terrorists. The location of the alleged attack is an al-Qaeda-affiliated controlled area in Idlib province. It is from here that the Western-funded White Helmets operate. Rather conveniently, they were soon at the scene of the alleged attack without the necessary protective clothing being filmed hosing down victims.

As these are the kinds of people who cut out and eat human organs as well as decapitate heads, they are unlikely to have any compunction in desisting from an opportunity to use Syrian civilians, including children and women, as a form of ‘war porn propaganda’ in order to garner public sympathy as the pretext for Western intervention.

Syrian-based journalist, Tom Dugan, who has been living in the country for the last four years, [claims](#) no gas attack happened. Rather, he asserts that the Syrian air force destroyed a terrorist-owned and controlled chemical weapons factory mistaking it for an ammunition dump, and “the chemicals spilled out.” This seems to be the most plausible explanation.

Mr Dugan’s version is markedly similar to the analysis of former DIA colonel, Patrick Lang Donald who, on April 7, 2017 [said](#):

“Trump’s decision to launch cruise missile strikes on a Syrian Air Force Base was based on a lie. In the coming days the American people will learn that the Intelligence Community knew that Syria did not drop a military chemical weapon on innocent civilians in Idlib. Here is what happened:

1. The Russians briefed the United States on the proposed target. This is a process that started more than two months ago. There is a dedicated phone line that is being used to coordinate and deconflict (i.e., prevent US and Russian air assets from shooting at each other) the upcoming operation.
2. The United States was fully briefed on the fact that there was a target in Idlib that the Russians believes was a weapons/explosives depot for Islamic rebels.
3. The Syrian Air Force hit the target with conventional weapons. All involved expected to see a massive secondary explosion. That did not happen. Instead, smoke, chemical smoke, began billowing from the site. It turns out that the Islamic rebels used that site to store chemicals, not sarin, that were deadly. The chemicals included organic phosphates and chlorine and they followed the wind and killed civilians.
4. There was a strong wind blowing that day and the cloud was driven to a nearby village and caused casualties.
5. We know it was not sarin. How? Very simple. The so-called “first responders” handled the victims without gloves. If this had been sarin they would have died. Sarin on the skin will kill you. How do I know? I went through “Live Agent” training at Fort McClellan in Alabama.

The former colonel’s testimony is extremely persuasive and exposes the media’s attempts to take at face value Pentagon propaganda. Another convincing reason to discount the official narrative, is because Assad doesn’t possess any chemical weapons. Even *The Wall Street Journal*, citing a Hague-based watchdog agency, [conceded](#) on June 23, 2014 that “the dangerous substances from Syria’s chemical weapons program, including sulfur mustard and precursors of sarin, have now been removed from the country after a monthlong process.”

Pattern

The alleged attack follows a recent pattern of anti-Assad stories exemplified by four similar controversial events in which the media have attempted to pass fiction off as fact. The first of these on February 13, 2017, relates to [the findings](#) of a report by Amnesty International which contends that Assad was responsible for the “execution by mass hangings” of up to 13,000 people. The alleged atrocity that [evoked](#) in the press comparisons to Nazi concentration camps, was within days [criticised](#) for its unsubstantiated and uncorroborated claims.

It should be recalled that it was Amnesty International who uncritically supported the emergence of a [fake news story](#) during the first Gulf War in which Iraqi soldiers were said to have taken scores of babies out of incubators in Kuwait City leaving them to die.

The second press release, three days after the mass-execution story aired, concerned the heart-rending case of a Syrian boy who Anne Barnard of the *New York Times* [reported on](#)

[twitter](#) as having “his legs...cut because of attacks from Assad and Russia.”

It soon transpired, however, that the organization credited with filming the “attacks” was *Revolution Syria*, a pro-insurgency media outfit who also provided the videos for the equally fraudulent claim that the [Russians bombed a school](#) in Haas in October 2016. Dr Barbara McKenzie provides a detailed background to the story which can be read [here](#).

The third piece of false reporting to have emerged, is in connection with Security Council resolution 2235 which highlights the conclusions of a August, 2015 OPCW-UN [report](#). The said report, aimed at introducing new sanctions against Syria (which Russia and China vetoed), didn’t make the claims subsequently attributed to it in the corporate media, namely that between April, 2014 and August, 2015 the Assad government was definitively responsible for three chemical attacks using chlorine.

Security analyst Charles Shoebridge [pointed out](#) on March 1, 2017, that “most media didn’t even seem to bother reading the report”. Shoebridge confirmed that the OPCW-UN investigation contained findings that did not correspond to what the public was being told. Pointing out the reports many caveats and reservations, the analyst [said](#) the evidence “wasn’t sufficiently good to declare that Syria had dropped chlorine to a standard that could be considered “strong”, or “overwhelming”, adding that “investigators were largely reliant on reports from the White Helmets.”

Finally, independent journalist Gareth Porter inferred that U.N. investigators increasingly make their conclusions fall in line with Western propaganda after [he exposed](#) distortions contained in a March 1, 2017 [report by the United Nations’ “Independent International Commission of Inquiry”](#) which claimed that an airstrike on a humanitarian aid convoy in the west of Aleppo City on Sept. 19, 2016, was undertaken by Syrian government planes. Porter [reveals](#) that the reports findings were based on pro-rebel Syrian White Helmets testimonies that were “full of internal contradictions.”



Extraordinarily, in March, 2016 German journalist Dr. Ulfkotte brought the lies of the mainstream out into the open by confessing live on television that he was forced to publish the works of intelligence agents under his own name, adding that noncompliance with these orders would result in him losing his job. Sharing this information in front of millions of people (reminiscent of the film *Network*), Ulfkotte [said](#):

“I’ve been a journalist for about 25 years, and I was educated to lie, to betray, and not to tell the truth to the public. But seeing right now within the last months how the German and American media tries to bring war to the people in Europe, to bring war to Russia — this is a point of no return and I’m going to stand up and say it is not right what I have done in the past, to manipulate people, to make propaganda against Russia, and it is not right what my colleagues do and have done in the past because they are bribed to betray the people, not only in Germany, all over Europe.”

The inability of mainstream journalists to undertake basic fact-checking illuminated by the examples described, reinforce the veracity of Ulfkotte’s claims that corporate journalists are “educated to lie, to betray, and not to tell the truth to the public.” But more than that, it amounts to a stark admission that the corruption at the heart of the elite media and political

establishment is systemic. As Mark Doran on Twitter [put it](#): “Our corrupt politics, our international crime, and our ‘free media’ form a seamless whole.” The goal of this consolidation of power is to secure yet another middle east resource grab.

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