

## The Evidence We Were Never Meant to See

by Robert Fisk via darcy - The Independent UK *Tuesday, May 28 2019, 7:48pm*

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We like to take the Big Boys on trust. No longer do we believe in our meretricious little leaders with their easy lies and twitters: the Trumps and Mays and now all the nationalists of Europe. We certainly don't put any credit in Arab dictators.

But when, despite all its bureaucracy and corruption, the UN tells us that the world faces climate change, we largely believe what it says. If the International Red Cross warns us of a humanitarian catastrophe in Africa, we tend to take their word for it. And when the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) - which represents 193 member states throughout the world - reports on chlorine attacks in Syria, we assume we are hearing the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Until now. For in the last few days, there has emerged disturbing evidence that in its final report on the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime in the city of Douma last year, the OPCW deliberately concealed from both the public and the press the existence of a dissenting 15-page assessment of two cylinders which had supposedly contained molecular chlorine - perhaps the most damning evidence against the Assad regime in the entire report.

The OPCW officially maintains that these canisters were probably dropped by an aircraft - probably a helicopter, presumably Syrian - over Douma on 7 April 2018. But the dissenting assessment, which the OPCW made no reference to in its published conclusions, finds there is a "higher probability that both cylinders were manually placed at those two locations rather than being delivered from aircraft".

It is difficult to underestimate the seriousness of this manipulative act by the OPCW. In a response to the conservative author Peter Hitchens, who also writes for the Mail on Sunday - he is of course the brother of the late Christopher Hitchens - the OPCW admits that its so-called technical secretariat "is conducting an internal investigation about the unauthorised [sic] release of the document".

Then it adds: "At this time, there is no further public information on this matter and the OPCW is unable to accommodate [sic] requests for interviews". It's a tactic that until now seems to have worked: not a single news media which reported the OPCW's official conclusions has followed up the story of the report which the OPCW suppressed.

And you bet the OPCW is not going to "accommodate" interviews. For here is an institution investigating a war crime in a conflict which has cost hundreds of thousands of lives - yet its only response to an enquiry about the engineers' "secret" assessment is to concentrate on its own witch-hunt for the source of the document it wished to keep secret from the world.

If this is not lamentable enough, the OPCW - whose final report came to more than a hundred pages and which even issued an easy-to-read precis version for journalists - now slams shut its steel doors in the hope of preventing even more information reaching the press.

Far more dangerous is that its act of censorship has provided an ocean of propaganda for the west's

opponents, for the Syrian regime and for the Russians. Russia Today has been regaling its viewers with tales of how Nato powers politically control the OPCW. American websites – pro-peace but also, alas, pro-conspiracy – are having a field day with the engineers’ conflicting report.

And as for the gullible, viewing, reading public – us – this outrageous deceit by this supposedly authoritative body of international scientists can lead to only one conclusion: that we must resort once more to the Assanges and the Chelsea Mannings – “traitors” who harm western security in the eyes of their enemies – and the revelations of groups like Wikileaks, if we want to know the truth of what happens in our world and the real story behind the official reports.

Institutional – and journalistic – memory is such that we should perhaps take a trip down memory lane to remind ourselves of the importance of the 2018 Douma attack. As Syrian government troops closed in on Islamist-held Douma in the early spring of last year – besieging several square miles of apartment blocks, slums and narrow streets on the eastern edge of Damascus – videos transmitted from the scene showed harrowing footage of civilians foaming at the mouth and apparently choking to death after inhaling gas.

The Damascus government denied the claim. So did the Russians. But on the basis that sufficient evidence of a gas attack had been provided, the US, Britain and France launched bombing raids into Syria. At a press conference in London, Theresa May conducted a blistering condemnation of the Assad dictatorship for using gas against women and children.

There had been many reports of chemical attacks by the regime in Syria before the Douma episode, but the world’s response to the video evidence from the ward of a makeshift hospital there turned the event into a major international crisis. Among the American cruise missile targets was a scientific centre in Damascus which the OPCW had itself cleared of any involvement in chemical warfare in the autumn of 2018. But within two weeks – after delays imposed by the Syrians for “security” reasons – international scientists from the OPCW, who had already interviewed doctors from the Douma hospital, arrived in the streets where the chemical attack allegedly took place.

In their final official report in March this year, the OPCW say that although no “organophosphorous nerve agents” – sarin gas, to you and me – were found in Douma and that those recorded as dying in the attack had already been buried, their team, which it says included “mechanical engineering” experts, concluded that the canisters found in two specific locations had passed through concrete and a ceiling to impact on the floor of buildings.

It is possible, the OPCW said, “that the cylinders were the sources of the substances containing reactive chlorine”. Testimony, environmental and biomedical samples and toxicological and ballistic analyses, “provide reasonable grounds that the use of toxic chemical as a weapon took place.” In other words, the canisters had fallen from the sky.

The then-unrevealed document titled “Unclassified – OPCW Sensitive, Do Not Circulate – Engineering Assessment of the Two Cylinders Observed at the Douma Incident – Executive Summary” and dated 27 February this year, is authored by an engineer whose name is all over the internet but which we shall not repeat here. It draws diametrically opposite conclusions to the published report, stating that the “engineering sub-team cannot be certain that the cylinders at either location arrived there as a result of being dropped from an aircraft”.

And why not? “The dimensions, characteristics and appearance of the cylinders and the surrounding scene of the incidents were inconsistent with what would have been expected in the case of either cylinder having been delivered from an aircraft ... In summary, observations at the scene of the two

locations together with subsequent analysis suggest that there is a higher probability that both cylinders were manually placed at those two locations rather than being delivered by aircraft.”

Put bluntly, the paper is suggesting that the location of the cylinders was a set-up, that someone inside Douma immediately after the bombings of 7 April 2018 – and no one, not even the Syrians or Russians, deny there was conventional bombing and shelling that night – placed the cylinders in the locations in which they were subsequently examined by the OPCW. Since the first images of the cylinders in these locations were shown on footage before the Syrians and Russians entered Douma, the obvious corollary is that forces opposed to the Assad regime may have put them there.

In all cases of this kind, it is necessary to understand that the search for evidence of gas attacks is notoriously difficult. It is necessarily an inexact science. Unlike shell fragments, shrapnel, mortar base plates, rocket computer codings or arms manuals, gas carries no convenient label which might betray the owners or manufacturers. Chemicals contain no computer parts. And thus both the OPCW’s official report and the suppressed engineers’ assessment are very scientific documents – perhaps arcane to the uninitiated – but they are worth reading in their entirety, perhaps with a science dictionary to hand. Readers can find both the full report and, after a little detective work, the leaked engineers’ report on the internet.

The OPCW might have saved itself much embarrassment – and ridicule by the Russians – if it had simply told the whole truth: that while a majority of its scientists came to the conclusion that the “gas” cylinders came through the roof (ie, from an aircraft), a minority report believed that they did not.

This would have been no more than the practice of a public enquiry which includes a dissenting minority point of view. But that was obviously not what the OPCW wanted. Hence its own slightly odd final conclusion that there were “reasonable grounds” to believe that toxic chemicals had been used in Douma: “reasonable grounds” might be an acceptable response to evidence at the scene of a domestic crime – but hardly sufficient to retrospectively justify a Nato air raid on Syria.

I was myself much vexed by the scenes I encountered in Douma when I arrived a few days after the attack. I did not dismiss the possibility that gas had been used, but eyewitnesses and the head of the field hospital where the victims had been treated insisted they knew nothing of gas.

The doctor, who was at his home near the hospital at the time, insisted that the patients were suffering from hypoxia – from dust and dirt inhalation from the air bombings, and that someone whom he identified as a “White Helmet” NGO worker shouted “Gas!” and started a panic among the victims. The official OPCW report records precisely the same events, along with the doctor’s memory of the man who shouted “Gas!”. But interestingly the OPCW did not identify the man as a “White Helmet”.

But my own report in *The Independent* – and the condemnation visited upon it later by critics – is utterly trivial in comparison to the implications of the OPCW’s decision to suppress the report of its own engineers. Perhaps they will discover the source of the leak. Perhaps they will claim that part of it is fabricated, though this is highly unlikely since they have already referred to “the unauthorised release of the document”.

But two words of warning. Just because the OPCW took the extraordinary decision to cover up some of its evidence in Douma does not mean that gas has not been used in Syria by the government or even by the Russians or by Isis and its fellow Islamists. Undoubtedly it has. All stand guilty of war crimes in the Syrian conflict. The OPCW’s dishonesty – for that is what it amounts to – does not let

war criminals off the hook.

There's another red light. We all remember how, after falsely claiming that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, we invaded Iraq on these false pretences and - within a few years - claimed that Iran was making weapons of mass destruction, and then threatened Iran with war, something we continue to the present day. What if we are now told that yet once more Syria is using gas against its enemies?

Strangely, amid the revelations of the OPCW's hidden report, the US State Department - just two days ago - announced that "we continue to see signs that the Assad regime may be renewing its use of chemical weapons, including an alleged chlorine attack in northwest Syria on the morning of 19 May 2019..."

So here we go again.

Copyright applies.

Also see:

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/51680.htm>

*[The evidence stands irrefutably now and forever, our bought puppet western governments LIE and deceive the masses in order to serve their masters, and who are they?*

*While it is known the public is slow to react, it nevertheless must and will, as no nation today can afford to be ruled in the background and/or foreground by treacherous, duplicitous, deceptive and mass murdering CRIMINALS.]*

<https://tinyurl.com/y6hvyovr>

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Inverse Times Open Publishing. <http://inversetimes.lingama.net/news/story-642.html>