



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 20, 2013

Chemical Weapons Charge May Be Pretext to Put U.S. Troops in Syria

Reports of a chemical-weapons attack in Syria have the “rebels” and their allies among Western governments and Sunni Arab dictatorships blaming the Bashar al-Assad regime, while the regime and its foreign partners such as authorities in Russia are blaming the [so-called “revolutionaries”](#) for the alleged deployment. At this point, it remains unclear who really carried out the attack or even if it actually happened. Advocates of more aggressive U.S. government intervention in the bloody conflict, however, are seizing the opportunity to urge the Obama administration — already deeply and lawlessly involved in backing the Syrian rebels — to unconstitutionally put American troops on the ground.



Even before the attack, certain members of Congress were seeking to legalize the U.S. government’s existing operations surrounding Syria, which reportedly include [arming, training, and financing](#) the so-called “revolutionaries” in the brutal civil war. However, with news of the alleged chemical attack — Obama had previously called the use of such weapons a “red line” that could not be crossed — pressure from advocates of deeper U.S. government involvement in the conflict is reaching a crescendo.

After financing and arming the so-called “rebels” — an [establishment-backed coalition](#) composed largely of foreign jihadists, [self-styled al-Qaeda members](#), and [other Islamic extremists](#) — the forces seeking “regime change” in Syria are now touting their involvement in the conflict to justify U.S. intervention. Among those leading the charge for putting U.S. troops on the ground is Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), blasted by critics as a war-mongering “RINO” for his unabashed support of big government at home and more lawless intervention abroad.

“My biggest fear beyond an Iranian nuclear weapons capability is the chemical weapons in Syria falling in the hands of extremists and Americans need to lead on this issue,” Sen. Graham [told Foreign Policy](#) after the alleged attack. “We need to come up with a plan to secure these weapons sites, either in conjunction with our partners [or] if nothing else by ourselves.”

Graham said U.S. troops must “absolutely” be put on the ground in Syria — a simple task at this point after Obama lawlessly put American forces [all along the border](#) in [Turkey](#) and [Jordan without even asking Congress](#). “I don’t care what it takes,” Graham explained, presumably referring to American lives and treasure. While the senator said the U.S. government needs partners in the region, he also noted that it would be better to send in U.S. troops than to allow the chemical weapons to fall into the wrong hands — apparently the hands of the same rebels that have already been [armed and trained by U.S. personnel](#).



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Of course, like others seeking an open U.S. military presence inside Syria, Graham did not mention the Obama administration's key role in bringing about the chaotic situation in the first place. The problem would almost certainly not even exist had the U.S. government and other foreign powers not funded, armed, and trained violent rebels to overthrow the existing Syrian government — [a former U.S. ally in the terror war that helped torture suspects for Washington](#).

"If there was a chemical weapons attack today, that is a change in the conducting of the war and it should remind us what's available in Syria and what would we risk as a nation if these weapons fall into the wrong hands," Graham continued. "And they are going to and somebody has to do something about it and that somebody has to be us."

Along with Graham, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), another politician dubbed a war-mongering RINO by critics, is also pounding the war drums demanding U.S. intervention in Syria. "If today's reports are substantiated, the President's red line has been crossed, and we would urge him to take immediate action to impose the consequences he has promised," McCain [said](#) in a joint statement with Graham released Tuesday. "That should include the provision of arms to vetted Syrian opposition groups, targeted strikes against Assad's aircraft and SCUD missile batteries on the ground, and the establishment of safe zones inside Syria to protect civilians and opposition groups."

In the House, meanwhile, top Democrats are seeking to pass legislation purporting to legalize the direct and overt arming of "rebels" by the Obama administration — something that, according to news reports and officials, has been covertly underway since early in the conflict. Even before the reports of chemical weapons being used, Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), the ranking Democrat on the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee, announced a bill that would provide up to \$150 million in lethal and non-lethal "aid" to rebel factions deemed acceptable to the administration. Almost half-a-billion U.S. taxpayer dollars has already been openly spent for the cause, not including covert assistance.

"The bloody tragedy in Syria continues, with no end in sight," Rep. Engel wrote in a letter to fellow lawmakers cited in [media reports](#) trying to drum up support for his "Free Syria" Act. "It is time for us to develop a comprehensive approach to stopping the carnage. That means not just more humanitarian aid, and assistance for the Syrian Opposition Coalition — but also the strongest possible support for responsible elements of the armed opposition, including carefully calibrated training and equipment, both lethal and nonlethal. It is past time to stop the madness in Syria."

Now, with the alleged use of chemical weapons, the war drums are beating louder than ever. Obama, however, is apparently trying to appear responsible after lawlessly arming violent jihadists in the half-baked effort to depose Assad. While trying to downplay accusations that the Western-backed rebels were to blame for the attack, White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters on Tuesday that the administration was still "evaluating" so-called "intelligence" out of Syria.

"We have no evidence to substantiate the charge that the opposition has used chemical weapons. We are deeply skeptical of a regime that has lost all credibility, and we would also warn the regime against making these kinds of charges as any kind of pretext or cover for its use of chemical weapons," Carney [claimed](#) without noting that [numerous accusations leveled by the administration and the rebels against Assad](#) have [crumbled upon closer scrutiny](#). "We are evaluating the charges that are being made and the allegations, consulting closely with our partners, in the region and in the international community."

The U.S. ambassador to Syria, meanwhile, [told](#) lawmakers that so far, despite claims to the contrary, the administration did not actually have any evidence that chemical weapons were even used. "So far



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we have no evidence to substantiate the reports that chemical weapons were used yesterday,” Robert Ford told the House Foreign Affairs Committee, adding that officials were “concerned” and trying to verify the accuracy of the claims.

On March 20, the Syrian regime’s ambassador to the United Nations, Bashar Ja’afari, told reporters that the dictatorship was requesting that UN boss Ban Ki-moon “form a specialized, independent and neutral technical mission to investigate the use by the terrorist groups operating in Syria of chemical weapons yesterday against civilians in the town of Khan al-Assad in Aleppo.” Noting that the Syrian government has already warned the UN that rebels may use chemical weapons and then try to blame the regime, the ambassador asked the global organization for help as “a sign of good faith, good will, good intentions” to the “international community,” public opinion, and the Syrian people.

“The Syrian government, if it has such weapons, will never use them against its own population,” Ja’afari was quoted as saying in media reports. He also noted that his regime was a party to myriad UN treaties on weapons of mass destruction and that it had previously proposed a ban on such WMDs throughout the Middle East — a measure that was apparently blocked by the United States.

The Russian government, which has so far stood behind Assad and his regime in the face of a broad foreign-backed assault, [echoed the claims](#) of Syrian officials. In a statement released by the Russian Foreign Ministry, officials accused Western-backed rebel forces of using ammunition “containing a poisonous substance” that killed at least 16 and wounded another 100.

“According to information coming from Damascus, a case of the use of chemical weapons by the armed opposition was recorded early in the morning of March 19 in Aleppo province,” the statement said. “We are very seriously concerned by the fact that weapons of mass destruction are falling into the hands of the rebels, which further worsens the situation in Syria and elevates the confrontation in the country to a new level.”

Regardless of whether or not chemical weapons were used — and regardless of who was responsible for deploying the WMDs if the reports are accurate — U.S. lawmakers and officials appear to be seeking any pretext to put American forces in Syria and finally depose the regime. Analysts, however, have long said that the consequences of such a move, apparently just a step on the road to “regime change” in Iran, would be devastating.

Tens of thousands of innocent people have already been killed in the conflict, with [Christians and other religious minorities among the Islamist rebels’ primary targets](#). An estimated one million or more refugees have fled the conflict so far. U.S. forces are already apparently arming and training the opposition without any declaration of war or lawful authority from Congress. If and when American boots end up on the ground in Syria, matters could easily go from bad to worse in a flash.

Photo of victims of alleged chemical attack receiving treatment in Syria: AP Images

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