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## Pentagon: Plans in Place to Seize Syria's Chemical Weapons

By Jason Ditz

August 22, 2012

US officials familiar with the situation say that the Pentagon has a [contingency plan](#) in place for seizing Syria's chemical weapons arsenal should President Obama order them to do so, and that the plan involves sending "small teams" of special operations forces into Syria.

The idea that this could be accomplished with only "small teams" of ground troops is dramatically far afield of what officials were saying only last week, when they claimed that the plans involved a [50,000-60,000](#) strong occupation force just to secure weapons, and even more for "peacekeeping."

Syria is known to have a chemical weapon arsenal, but exactly where and exactly how much is a matter of considerable speculation. Though the US claims to have some intelligence on the matter it is doubtful, particularly after the Iraq occupation, that they will prove particularly reliable.

Officials did not indicate what "small teams" meant in terms of numbers, or try to explain the difference from last week's figures. It could reflect two different schools of thought inside the administration, or could simply be a way to get "some" troops on the ground by any means necessary and then later on use the larger estimates as an excuse to escalate.