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<http://www.globalresearch.ca/natos-war-on-syria-just-got-dirtier/5361103?print=1>

## NATO's War on Syria Just Got Dirtier

By Tony Cartalucci

December 10, 2013

*West scrambles to cover up Syria false flag revelations as Pulitzer Prize-winner & Syria's Electronic Army expose all.*

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh, who had warned as early as 2007 of US-Israeli-Saudi plans to use Al Qaeda as proxies to overthrow the Syrian government, has published another groundbreaking report titled, "Whose Sarin?" In it, Hersh states (emphasis added):

Barack Obama did not tell the whole story this autumn when he tried to make the case that Bashar al-Assad was responsible for the chemical weapons attack near Damascus on 21 August. In some instances, he omitted important intelligence, and in others he presented assumptions as facts. Most significant, he failed to acknowledge something known to the US intelligence community: that the Syrian army is not the only party in the country's civil war with access to sarin, the nerve agent that a UN study concluded – without assessing responsibility – had been used in the rocket attack. In the months before the attack, the American intelligence agencies produced a series of highly classified reports, culminating in a formal Operations Order – a planning document that precedes a ground invasion – citing evidence that the al-Nusra Front, a jihadi group affiliated with al-Qaida, had mastered the mechanics of creating sarin and was capable of manufacturing it in quantity. When the attack occurred al-Nusra should have been a suspect, but the administration cherry-picked intelligence to justify a strike against Assad.

The lengthy report goes on in detail, covering the manner in which Western leaders intentionally manipulated or even outright fabricated intelligence to justify military intervention in Syria – eerily similar to the lies told to justify the invasion and occupation of Iraq, and the escalation of the war in Vietnam after the Gulf of Tonkin incident.



Image: The Syrian Arab Army is decisively winning the war through conventional means and would only invite the one possible method of changing that, foreign invention, through the use of chemical weapons. Commonsense, the evidence, and even the liars who would say otherwise, all point to NATO-backed terrorists as the culprits behind chemical weapon use in Syria’s ongoing conflict.

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The report also reveals that Al Nusra, Al Qaeda’s Syrian franchise, was identified by US intelligence agencies long ago for possessing chemical weapons. These are the same terrorists Hersh warned about in his 2007 article titled, “The Redirection: Is the Administration’s new policy benefiting our enemies in the war on terrorism?” which prophetically stated (emphasis added):

“To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East. In Lebanon, the Administration has coöperated with Saudi Arabia’s government, which is Sunni, in clandestine operations that are intended to weaken Hezbollah, the Shiite organization that is backed by Iran. **The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.**”

Hersh has now warned the public of both a conspiracy by the West to use terrorists to overthrow the sovereign government of Syria (which has unfolded exactly as was predicted years ago), as

well as their use of chemical weapons. He has also exposed the systematic manner in which the West has lied about the August 21, 2013 gas attack in Damascus.

As Hersh summed up his latest report, he asked a fundamental question those still insisting the Syrian government was behind the attack have failed to answer:

**The administration's distortion of the facts surrounding the sarin attack raises an unavoidable question:** do we have the whole story of Obama's willingness to walk away from his 'red line' threat to bomb Syria? He had claimed to have an iron-clad case but suddenly agreed to take the issue to Congress, and later to accept Assad's offer to relinquish his chemical weapons. It appears possible that at some point he was directly confronted with contradictory information: evidence strong enough to persuade him to cancel his attack plan, and take the criticism sure to come from Republicans.

The West abandoned its plans for military intervention in Syria because the world rejected its narrative, and despite assurances that the West had air tight intelligence, after many months still, the lid is tightly closed. It is clear that the West desired military intervention in the worst way, and had it possessed real intelligence linking the attacks to the Syrian government, it surely would have revealed it. As Hersh points out, they never had such evidence to begin with and depended entirely on their ability to sell yet another pack of lies to the public.

### **Armchair "Experts" to the Rescue**

But even with the West's capitulation in Syria, and months passing without a shred of credible evidence produced, hacks among Western media continue to perpetuate the original narrative. Among these are of course corporate-financier funded think-tanks and propaganda fronts like the Brookings Institution, Foreign Policy Magazine, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD), and establishment papers like the Guardian. In the middle of it all is couch-potato self-proclaimed weapons expert, Eliot Higgins, a representation of the West's propaganda 2.0 campaign.

UK-based Higgins lost his job and now spends his days combing social media sites for "evidence" he then analyzes and reports on. The Western media, with its propagandists expelled from Syria and many of its "sources" in Syria exposed in humiliating attempts to fabricate and manipulate evidence, quickly picked Higgins up and elevated his armchair blogging to "expert analysis." Since then, Higgins has joined the already discredited "Syrian Observatory for Human Rights" another UK-based individual, as the basis upon which the West's Syrian narrative spins.

The Guardian's Brian Whitaker, who has maintained a particularly suspicious proximity to Higgins and his work, recently published a startling condemnation of venerated Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Seymour Hersh. In a hit piece titled, "Investigating chemical weapons in Syria - Seymour Hersh and Brown Moses go head to head," "Brown Moses" referring to Eliot Higgins' alias, Whitaker claims:

In the blue corner, Seymour Hersh, one of America's most famous and highly paid investigative reporters. In the red corner,

Eliot Higgins, who sits at home in an English provincial town trawling the internet and tweets and blogs about his findings under the screen name Brown Moses.

On Sunday, in a 5,000-word article for the London Review of Books, Hersh suggested Syrian rebels, rather than the regime, could have been responsible for the chemical weapons attacks near Damascus on August 21.

On Monday, Higgins responded on the Foreign Policy website, demolishing the core of Hersh's argument in a mere 1,700 words.

While seeking to re-ignite the "whodunnit" debate about chemical weapons, Hersh's article unwittingly revealed a lot about the changing nature of investigative journalism. Hersh is old-school. He operates in a world of hush-hush contacts – often-anonymous well-placed sources passing snippets of information around which he constructs an article that challenges received wisdom.

The Hersh style of journalism certainly has a place, but in the age of the internet it's a diminishing one – as the web-based work of Higgins and others continually shows.

Whitaker is desperately attempting to keep the wheels on the establishment's new propaganda 2.0 vehicle – manipulating social media, much the way Hersh describes intelligence being manipulated, to create any outcome necessary to bolster a predetermined narrative.

What he doesn't address is the fact that Higgins' work almost entirely depends on videos posted online by people he does not know, who may be misrepresenting who they are, what they are posting, and their motivations for doing so – such is the nature of anonymity on the web and why this evidence alone is useless outside of a larger geopolitical context.

Both Whitaker and Higgins, who maintain that the Syrian government was behind the attacks, fail to address another glaring reality. A false flag attack is designed to look like the work of one's enemy. In other words, terrorists in Syria would use equipment, uniforms, weapons, and tactics that would pin the crime on the Syrian government. All Higgins has proved, thus far, is that the superficial details of the operation made for a convincing false flag attack.

### **Claims the Militants Can't Produce or Properly Handle Chemical Weapons are False**

Whitaker hails Higgins' Foreign Policy piece arrogantly titled, "Sy Hersh's Chemical Misfire," but in reality, all Higgins does is point out specifics of the attack, some of which are confirmed, some of which are implied – all of which could either have been the work of the government or militants. The question Higgins fails to answer is what motivation would the government have had to carry out the attacks with the UN based just miles away and with government forces already decisively winning the war with conventional weapons? The only possible scenario that would lead to the Syrian government losing this conflict now would be foreign military intervention – and the best way to make that happen would be by using chemical weapons.

Toward the end of Higgin's piece, he, like his friends at the Guardian, attempt to claim Al Nusra, contrary to Hersh's report, are most likely not capable of producing sarin. He states (emphasis added):

I asked chemical weapons specialist Dan Kaszeta for his opinion on that. He compared the possibility of Jabhat al-Nusra using chemical weapons to another terrorist attack involving sarin: the 1996 gassing of the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo cult.

“The 1994 to 1996 Japanese experience tells us that even a very large and sophisticated effort comprising many millions of dollars, a dedicated large facility, and a lot of skilled labor results only in liters of sarin, not tons,” Kaszeta said. “Even if the Aug. 21 attack is limited to the eight Volcano rockets that we seem to be talking about, we’re looking at an industrial effort two orders of magnitude larger than the Aum Shinrikyo effort. This is a nontrivial and very costly undertaking, and I highly doubt whether any of the possible nonstate actors involved here have the factory to have produced it. Where is this factory? Where is the waste stream? Where are the dozens of skilled people — not just one al Qaeda member — needed to produce this amount of material?”

Of course, to call Al Nusra a nonstate actor is not entirely truthful. Al Nusra and other extremist networks inside of Syria have had the US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel's backing since at least as early as 2007. Since 2011, Qatar and Turkey have also played immense roles in supporting Al Nusra – with NATO-member Turkey providing them sanctuary and even logistical support. Higgins and his “expert” ask where the factories, waste streams, and skilled people are – the answer is most likely somewhere within one of the many axis nations supporting Al Nusra. They certainly have the capacity to both manufacturer the gas and transport it into Syria – or conversely – provide Al Nusra with the supplies and personal to do it inside of Syria.

Higgins and his “expert's” attempt to make Al Nusra sound like cave dwelling simpletons running on a shoestring budget, when even the US State Department admitted by 2012 that the terrorist organization was operating at a national level, carrying out hundreds of attacks across the country. In an attempt to cover up the growing influence the Western-backing of Al Qaeda was creating within Syria, tales of vast “Twitter donations” were spun to explain how Al Nusra was expanding faster than so-called moderates who were receiving billions of dollars in equipment, training, vehicles, and weapons by the West and its regional allies. In reality, that torrent of cash and supplies was going intentionally into the hands of Al Nusra and other extremist groups.

Clearly, if anyone in Syria, beside the government, was going to produce and deploy chemical weapons, it would be Al Nusra.

Higgins, Whitaker, and other journalists have also maintained the West's official narrative that not only are they sure the government did it because the “evidence” suggests so and because the militants do not possess chemical weapons, but also because the militants fighting the government don't possess the training to carry out the attacks. Higgins has done a masterful job proving that all the militants would need is a flatbed truck and a metal tube to launch the

ordinance implicated in the attacks. As far as training in handling chemical weapons, CNN itself revealed the United States had long since taken care of that.

CNN's December 2012 report titled, "Sources: U.S. helping underwrite Syrian rebel training on securing chemical weapons," stated that:

The United States and some European allies are using defense contractors to train Syrian rebels on how to secure chemical weapons stockpiles in Syria, a senior U.S. official and several senior diplomats told CNN Sunday.

The training, which is taking place in Jordan and Turkey, involves how to monitor and secure stockpiles and handle weapons sites and materials, according to the sources. Some of the contractors are on the ground in Syria working with the rebels to monitor some of the sites, according to one of the officials.

### **Syrian Electronic Army E-Mails Exposes A Deceitful, Depraved Western Media**

While perhaps Higgins and company missed that CNN report, it is now revealed that at least Higgins, and several other journalists were told by an American contractor on the ground inside of Syria, that militants had gained access to chemical weapons and more importantly, were planning to use them in a false flag attack – this months before the August 21 attack in Damascus.

The Syrian Electronic Army (SEA) has released e-mails this week between American contractor Matthew Van Dyke and members of the Western media, including Higgins. The e-mails indicated that militants had chemical weapons and were planning to use them in an attack to frame the Syrian government – serving as impetus for wider foreign intervention. SEA's emails have been confirmed by Higgins himself in a series of self-incriminating tweets where he goes, point-by-point, attempting to provide explanations for the damning revelations.

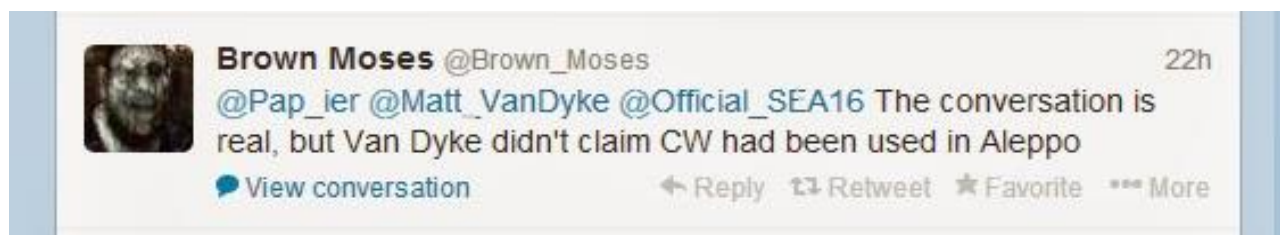


Image: It's true – but... The back-peddling Eliot Higgins aka Brown Moses may just be presiding over his early retirement as an establishment propagandist – thanks not to some Western NGO dealing in transparency, but the Syrian Electronic Army, listed by the FBI as “terrorists.”

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The e-mails reveal multiple correspondences regarding chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists aimed at using them in a false flag operation, Higgins' and Van Dyke's mutual

“benefactor” located in Virginia, “near DC” (Langley, Virginia?), and job offers for Higgins from NGOs and a defense contractor involving “open source intelligence,” the new buzzword used by Higgins and Whitaker in regards to the new form of propaganda they both participate in.

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:42pm UTC+03  
I have a source that has been reliable in the past, who gave me information about the rebels having acquired a small quantity a few months ago, and I know what building they came out of.

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:42pm UTC+03  
and I know some things about the building, having been to the site, that give the information some additional credibility

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:43pm UTC+03  
Did they mention what type?

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:43pm UTC+03  
The Syrian regime was openly contemplating the idea of letting inspectors into the Aleppo case for a reason

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:47pm UTC+03  
I'm just telling you so that you'll keep an open mind about these incidents and not have anything come totally unexpected to you in the future about chemical weapons use in Syria

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:48pm UTC+03  
I'll keep an eye out then

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:49pm UTC+03  
You did not hear any of this from me

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:49pm UTC+03  
Okay, understood

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:52pm UTC+03  
I mean privately you can discuss it with other journalists I suppose and tell them that I told you, since I did post something about it on The NVC awhile back, but what I posted on The NVC was more vague than what I just told you, and even what I told you is more vague than the level of details I actually know.

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:53pm UTC+03  
I just don't want to be quoted in any articles about it. I'm just telling journalists so they're prepared for the possibility of gas exposure if they work in the Aleppo area.

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:53pm UTC+03  
as a safety issue

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 7:54pm UTC+03  
Yeah, not a problem

Eliot Higgins Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 11:14pm UTC+02

I'm trying to get some full time employment with a NGO, currently I'm doing part time consultancy work for HRW on cluster munitions

Eliot Higgins Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 11:15pm UTC+02

I've been making a database of cluster bomb videos, and they'll use that data for various projects. I think they plan to go to some UN conference with it

Matthew VanDyke Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 11:16pm UTC+02

ah ok, that is good. I'm glad things are going well.

Eliot Higgins Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 11:16pm UTC+02

UNMAS has been talking to me about mapping these so they know where do go and clean them up after the conflict, so hopefully it'll save some limbs and lives.

Matthew VanDyke Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 11:17pm UTC+02

well, I can see where Kevin Dawes is suspicious, you have a lot of knowledge yet I don't think anybody knows anything really about you. And you blog/tweet under an assumed name ;)

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:29pm UTC+02

anyway, my ITN interview is being recorded tomorrow. Thanks again for the referral.

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:30pm UTC+02

Ah great, hope it goes well, I got an interesting offer off the back of that, so it was really worth it

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:30pm UTC+02

cool, what?

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:31pm UTC+02

A **counter-terrorism** company has invited me over to discuss opportunities in relation to open source intelligence gathering, might include sponsorship or even a job

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:31pm UTC+02

that is great

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:32pm UTC+02

like a Stratfor type company?

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:32pm UTC+02

Allen Vanguard, they manufacture EOD gear and bomb detection stuff, as well as produce intelligence reports

Eliot Higgins Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:32pm UTC+02

lots of government contracts, stuff like that

Matthew VanDyke Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 7:33pm UTC+02

I recently wrote a few pages report for a risk advisory company about my time in Aleppo. They paid \$1,000 for it.

## Being a Propagandist is Lucrative

The e-mails illustrate prior knowledge of chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists who fully planned on using them in a false flag operation. Higgins and others had this information, and now, have Seymour Hersh's report as well, yet they still pose the argument that the militants had neither the ability nor the means to carry out the attacks. In fact, it appears that the Western media and underlings like Higgins went out of their way specifically to discredit the notion from even being considered. In other words, a concerted cover-up.



The e-mails above, and others in the large cache also reveal the possible motivation for these lies. So-called journalists and researchers peddling the West's narrative appear to have a wide range of lucrative offers presented to them, as well as funding for them to continue doing the work they are already involved in. This of course is only the case so long as their narratives mesh with the institutions, corporations, and individuals cutting the checks.

Why would Higgins even mention the possibility of a false flag attack, when all that would do is alienate him from the establishment he is so eagerly trying to be a part of? His recent piece in Foreign Policy and the Guardian's ceaseless promotion of his work are favors that demand reciprocation – in the form of toeing the line and selling a narrative Higgins and others know is deceitful.

That Higgins, the Guardian, and Foreign Policy are prepared to throw veteran journalist Seymour Hersh under the bus to protect their interests, gives us a look into the depths of depravity within which this “new” media Whitaker celebrates, operate.

Worst of all for the West, is that the transparency and accountability they claim to uphold, had to be kept in check by the SEA - an organization wanted by the FBI as “terrorists.” We would be led to believe by the likes of Whitaker, Higgins, and Van Dyke that the Syrian government and their supporters are the villains, but in their own words and actions we see the truth.