

There was a poison gas attack in Khan Sheikhoun, Syria, on April 4th, 2017, causing more than 70 deaths. Yet, it is still completely unclear who pulled the strings. Was it Assad's enemies? Actors from abroad or the Syrian military? While analysing, particular restraint is required since there are many unanswered questions. The mass media in Germany and Switzerland, however, are not restrained at all.

Blick and Bild join the war

Blick und Bild haben den Gift-Blick and Bild, Swiss and German newspapers, immediately blamed president Bashar al Assad for the poison gas attack – without any evidence – effectively legitimizing US president Donald Trump's bombing of Syria.

On the evening of April 7th, the headline in the Swiss free newspaper Blick was: "Trump's response to the dead children ... He takes revenge for Assad's poison gas attack on innocent civilians." German newspaper Bild's headline sounded similar on April 8th: "Trump avenges Syrian's gassed children". On its front page Bild printed images of American missiles together with a Syrian child wearing an oxygen mask, captioning: "After Assad's poison gas attack on Tuesday: A small child is supplied with oxygen".

The Tonkin Gulf lie

Bild's and Blick's journalists should know better: tricks, lies and deception are always part of warfare. By passing on unexamined statements to the masses, they amplify the spiral of violence. Historians like me know many cases in which lies of war have caused great suffering.

On August 4th, 1964, US president Lyndon Johnson claimed that the American battleship Maddox was attacked by Vietnam's torpedoes in the Gulf of Mexico. Today we know it was a lie. Maddox had never been hit by torpedoes. Johnson then stated that "renewed hos-

Who used poison gas in Syria?

There are laws and rules even at war. The use of poison gas and chemical weapons is worldwide strictly prohibited. The deployment of poison gas is categorized as a serious infringement of the international law and a war crime by the International Court of Justice.

By Daniele Ganser



Photograph by Jens Wernicke

tile actions against United States ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action in reply ... firmness in the right is indispensable today for peace". With these words Johnson escalated the Vietnam War that ended only in 1975.

The Tonkin Gulf lie had fatal consequences: Around three million Vietnamese were killed in the Vietnam War, many of them children. The USA lost about 58,000 American soldiers, more than in any other war since 1945. Additionally, the US deployed the chemical herbicide Agent Orange. This led to severe malformations to unborn children in the womb. According to estimates by the Red Cross, around one million Vietnamese suffered from the

late effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam in 2002 – among them approximately 100,000 children who were malformed. In the context of Syria, promoting war by referring to children, is extremely cynical.

Trump and the 'beautiful babies'

President Trump justifies his attack on Syria by referring to poison gas. Assad "launched a horrible chemical attack on innocent civilians using a deadly nerve agent. ... Even beautiful babies were cruelly murdered at this very barbaric attack. No child of God should ever suffer such horror. ... We pray for the lives of the wounded and for the souls of those who passed. And we hope that as long as America stands for jus-

tice, that peace and harmony will, in the end, prevail".

More and more people are questioning whether the USA does, or should, represent justice. It is known that the USA arms and trains Assad's enemies. This is clearly illegal. Caution is required, precisely when stirring emotions by referring to the death of children. Already in the Gulf War in 1990, the population was deliberately shocked by the Kuwait Incubator Baby Hoax.

Kuwait Incubator Baby Hoax

In that case, a 15-year-old girl introduced as Nayirah, told the Human Rights Committee of the US Congress in tears on October 10th, 1990 that during the invasion of Kuwait by the Iraqis she



Air Force Boeing B-52 (nicknam „Casper The Friendly Ghost“), dropping (340 kg) bombs over Vietnam. Later, 50,000 of the „Arc Light“ Campaign were dropped. (Wikipedia / U.S. Air Force Photo / Public Domain)



US President Johnson at the announcement of the bombing of North Vietnam on August 4th, 1964 (wikipedia / Photo by Cecil W. Stoughton - U.S. National Archives and Records Administration / public-free)

worked in a hospital in Kuwait and saw soldiers taking babies out of their incubators, throwing them onto the cold floor and leaving them to die. This was a lie. President George Bush Senior, however, took this brutal story up, repeated it in numerous speeches and claimed that 312 newborns were killed this way.

Only after the war, it turned out that the incubator story was a disgraceful lie and that Nayirah had never worked in a hospital in Kuwait. Her name was, in fact, Nijirah al-Sabah and she was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the USA. The Bush Administration and the royal family of Kuwait had misled the public.

No empathy for children in Iraq

After the victory over Iraq in the war of 1991, the USA imposed an economic embargo over the country in 1996 which led to the deaths of many Iraqi civilians, including children. “We have heard that a half-million children have died,” the American TV journalist Lesley Stahl said. The journalist asked Madeleine Albright, who since 1993 had been the UN Representative of the Clinton Administration, whether she thought the

embargo was justified: “I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And — and, you know, is the price worth it [the embargo]?” UN Representative Albright thought for a moment, then she replied coolly:

“I think this is a very hard choice, but the price — we think the price is worth it.

This shows clearly: The US empire has never shown any empathy towards dead children in the Middle East. From a historic perspective, there is no empathy whatsoever, now — in the context of the Syrian war — that images of dead children are being distributed.

Poison gas attack in Khan al Assal on March 19th, 2013

Der syrische Bürgerkrieg ist The Syrian civil war is a messy one. The USA, France, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey are trying to overthrow Assad by arming and training rebels and terrorists. Russia, Iran and China are trying to stop this, intending to keep Assad in power and increase the Syrian mili-

tary’s force. In this confusion it is more and more difficult to understand who, where and when has used poison gas.

Poison gas was used for the first time on March 19, 2013, in Khan al-Assal near Aleppo. Immediately, the media claimed that President Assad’s Syrian government was responsible for the operation. But this was not true:

We have witness statement by doctors, refugees of neighbouring countries and hospital staff, stating that chemical weapons were used — not by the government but by the opposition”, explains the Swiss Carla del Ponte, former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for the war crimes in former Yugoslavia.

The Swiss doctor Franco Cavalli also confirmed: “The only secured case of the deployment of poison gas in Syria (Aleppo) was attributed clearly to the jihadists”. In the context of a false flag operation the rebels apparently laid the blame for the war crime on the government’s army in order to discredit Assad. But this failed.

“Among the insurgents the jihadists were responsible for the first deployment of chemical weapons in Khan al-Assal, close to Aleppo, where 29 people died”, the well-informed Günther Mey-

er confirmed, head of the Center for Research on the Arab World (CEFAW) of the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz

Poison gas attack in Ghouta on August 21st, 2013

The UN Security Council looked into this matter and decided to send experts to Syria in order to investigate the poison gas attack of Khan al Assal. If this investigation could have been conducted, the false flag operation would have been busted. The UN inspectors for chemical weapons arrived on August 19, 2013, but just before they could even take up their work there was a second and even bigger attack in Ghouta, close to Damascus, on August 21st, 2013, killing between 300 and 1,500 people.

The US empire immediately held Assad accountable for the crime. “We are prepared to strike whenever we choose”, explains President Barack Obama on TV. “What message will we send if a dictator can gas hundreds of children to death in plain sight and pay no price?”

At that time it was not clear if Assad or the rebels — supported by the USA, Turkey and Saudi Arabia — were responsible for

the Ghoutan attack. The American investigative journalist Seymour Hersh asks the crucial question: “Whose sarin?” and shows that the jihadists pulled the strings behind the attack.

Hersh revealed that already in May 2013 “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 Qaeda, had mastered the mechanics of creating sarin and was capable of manufacturing it in quantity”.

These were controversial news. “Al-Nusra is known to have carried out scores of suicide bombings against Christians and other non-Sunni Muslim sects inside Syria” in Syria, adding that al-Nusra wants to overthrow the Assad regime and establish sharia law.

David Shedd, deputy director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), was informed in June 2013 that “al-Nusra had the ability to acquire and use sarin”. Hersh also discovered that the Israeli Intelligence could also deliver a sample of the sarin that had been used.

President Obama, however, “ignored the data regarding al-Nusra and their ability to use sarin and continues to claim that only the Assad government has chemical weapons”, explains Hersh.

Turkey’s role in the Ghouta attack 2013

Courageous Turkish parliamentarians from the national parliament have taken up Hersh’s results and investigated the poison gas affair. They discovered that documents and material of an investigation – conducted by the public prosecution in Adana – against a sarin trader who were taken in custody confirmed that not Assad but his opponents, who are supported by the NATO countries, used the poison gas.



Al Tarab - 9th Iraqi Army Divisional Leader near Al Tarab, Iraq, are being advised by US Army Capt. Mark G. Zwirgzdas, on 19 March 2017, to support the combined joint task force operation Inherent Resolve. Iraqi security forces and partners are being advised. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Hull / Public Domain)

“We have phone recordings that show: ISIS received all necessary materials to produce deadly sarin gas via Turkey”, the Turkish parliamentarian Eren Erdem of the CHP party revealed in October 2015”. “Westerners are hypocrats about the situation”, Erdem realized.

He adds that the investigation of the chemical terror attack will not be carried on because Assad’s opponents supported by the USA and Turkey are responsible for the attack in Ghouta – not Assad.

The Turkish president Erdogan does not want to hear this and charged the deputy Eren Erdem with treason. “I am being targeted with death threats”, reported Erdem. “But I am patriotically opposed to something (the poison gas) that tramples on my country’s prestige”, noting he has an investigation file with “all the details about how sarin was procured in Turkey and delivered to the terrorists”.

Michael Lüders in Markus Lanz’ show

After the attack in Khan Sheikhoun, the use of poison gas in Ghouta was up-to-date once more in the media. Although the facts

suggest that Assad was not responsible for the attack but the rebels supported by the NATO, the Süddeutsche Zeitung again laid blame on Assad.

With the headline “The poison, the lies and the blame” the newspaper explained confused readers on April 5th, 2017: “Units of the Syrian army killed more than 1,400 people with sarin in attacks in the suburbs of Damascus in August 2017”.

A more precise analysis was presented by the Middle East expert Michael Lüders on German TV channel ZDF in Markus Lanz’ talk show on April 5th, 2017. Lüders explained that already in 2013 gas was used in the poison attack in Ghouta, which was delivered by the Turkish intelligence to the Nusra front, a group affiliated with al-Qaida in Syria. Lüders said:

“We know that that the regime very likely was not responsible for this poison gas attack.”

Who is profiting?

In order to analyse tricks and lies, researchers and conscious media consumers always need to ask themselves: Who will profit? This crucial question was articulated by Günter Meyer on the German radio station WDR5 on

April 6th when the journalist was talking with him about the poison gas attack in Khan Sheikhoun.

Meyer responded quickly:

“Clearly not the regime” since Assad “is gaining ground on all fronts. The rebels suffer defeat everywhere and are close to destruction. In this situation it is the last desperate attempt to turn the tide.”

It is possible, Meyer said, that the attack might have been a rebel’s false flag operation in order to force USA to intervene.

Newspaper sales are collapsing

Today we live in a media revolution. More and more people are doing research on the internet and get their own idea of the world. Tabloid newspaper such as Blick and Bild are stirring the masses’ emotions with headlines like “Trump revenges Syrian’s gassed children”.

Newspapers, however, are dropping in circulation. Bild is still Axel Springer publisher’s most widely circulated newspaper in Germany, however, it is experiencing a clear downward trend in circulation. Naturally, less people are willing to read it. Sales accounted for four million newspapers in 2000 while in 2010 sales already declined to three million. Today only 1.6 million people are willing to pay for the product.

The Swiss tabloid newspaper of the Ringier publishing house also shows a clear downward trend. At first, Blick could only be obtained for payment and the circulation was over 300,000 copies but the paid newspaper sales collapsed to 150,000 copies. The product Blick am Abend – also of the Ringier publishing house – is for free and only therefore the circulation still is 280,000 copies.

There is hope that more and more people turn themselves away from the war propaganda and stop paying for it. If independent voices of the peace



American „retaliatory“ attack with Tomahawk cruise missiles on the Syrian military air base at Shairat in April 2017. (AP / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ford Williams / U.S. Navy)

movement and media products such as Rubicon, NachdenkSeiten, Infosperber, background and KenFM receive free funds and are strengthened, fundamental change can take place.

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