

The French Intelligence Report of April 26, 2017 Contradicts the Allegations in the White House Intelligence Report of April 11, 2017

Theodore A. Postol
Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology, and National Security Policy
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Attached below are data derived from the *French Intelligence Report* published yesterday on April 26, 2017. A reading of the report *instantaneously* indicates that the *French Intelligence Report* of April 26, 2017 directly contradicts the *White House Intelligence Report* of April 11, 2017. The discrepancies between these two reports essentially result in two completely different narratives alleging nerve agent attacks in Syria on April 11, 2017. The fact that these two intelligence reports allege totally different circumstances associated with the same alleged event raises very serious questions that need to be investigated and reported to the American public.

The White House Intelligence Report (WHR) of April 11 alleged that a crater in the Northeast corner of Khan Sheikhoun was the source of a sarin release that killed and injured a significant number of people. The WHR cited publicly available evidence showing the crater where the alleged sarin release occurred and the areas adjacent to it. Inspection of the crater shown on video cited by the WHR showed that there was no evidence to show that the crater had been created by an airdropped chemical dispersal munition. Also of concern is that none of the local Syrian journalistic reports from that location showed the populated area that was immediately (within tens of meters) downwind of the alleged aerosol dispersal that would have been filled with nerve agent casualties. Instead, the local Syrian journalists walked in the opposite direction from the alleged aerosol dispersal plume to show a dead goat that was well up wind of the alleged dispersal.

Now, more than two weeks after the dubious allegations published in the WHR, the French Government has released a report that totally contradicts the already dubious allegations in the WHR.

The French Report instead claims that there were at least three munitions dropped from helicopters in the town of Saraqib, more than 30 miles north of the alleged sarin release crater identified by the WHR.

The WHR claims that a fixed wing aircraft was the originator of the airdropped munition at the alleged dispersal site. The French Intelligence Report alleges that a helicopter was used to drop sarin loaded grenades at three different locations in Saraqib.

Both reports cannot simultaneously be true.

The French Report essentially refutes the claims in the White House Intelligence Report of April 11, 2017. This is yet another indication that there are fundamental problems with the claims made by the White House that were used to justify the April 7, 2017 military strike in Syria. It also raises questions about statements praising the accuracy of the WHR by the National Security Advisor, H. R. McMaster, and the Secretary of Defense, James Mattis. Both claimed very high confidence in the quality and accuracy of the intelligence from the WHR.

The French Intelligence Report can be found at <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/syria/events/article/chemical-attack-in-syria-national-evaluation-presented-by-jean-marc-ayrault> on a webpage titled French Diplomacy (France Diplomatie). The description of the intelligence report and its appendix is under the subject heading *Chemical Attack in Syria - National Evaluation presented by Jean-Marc Ayrault following the Defense Council Meeting (26 April 2017)*

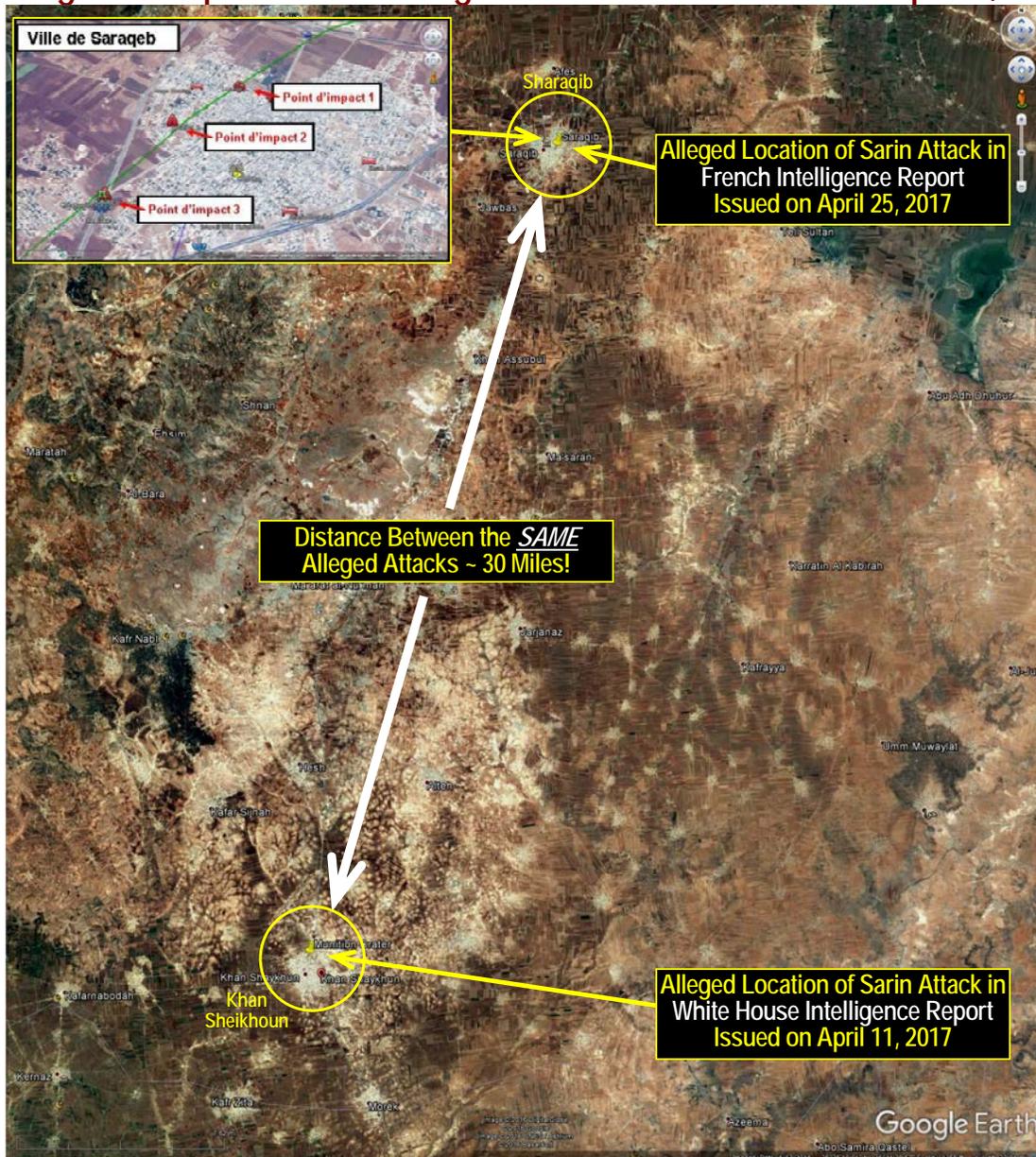
In addition, the appendix of the French Report lists the nerve agent attack of August 21, 2013 as proven to have been perpetrated by the Syrian government. Yet an article published in *The Atlantic* in April 2016 authored by Jeffrey Goldberg reported that President Obama said that he was told by James Clapper, the then Director of National Intelligence, that it was not a "slam dunk" that the Syrian government was the perpetrator of the attack in Damascus on August 21, 2013.

It therefore seems that there are extremely serious discrepancies in multiple intelligence reports that, at a minimum, raise fundamental questions about the veracity of the *White House Intelligence Report* – and the *French Intelligence Report* as well. This in turn raises serious questions about how the White House produced an alleged intelligence report that has been shown to have inconsistencies that indicate it could not possibly have been produced and reviewed by the professional US intelligence community.

Theodore A. Postol

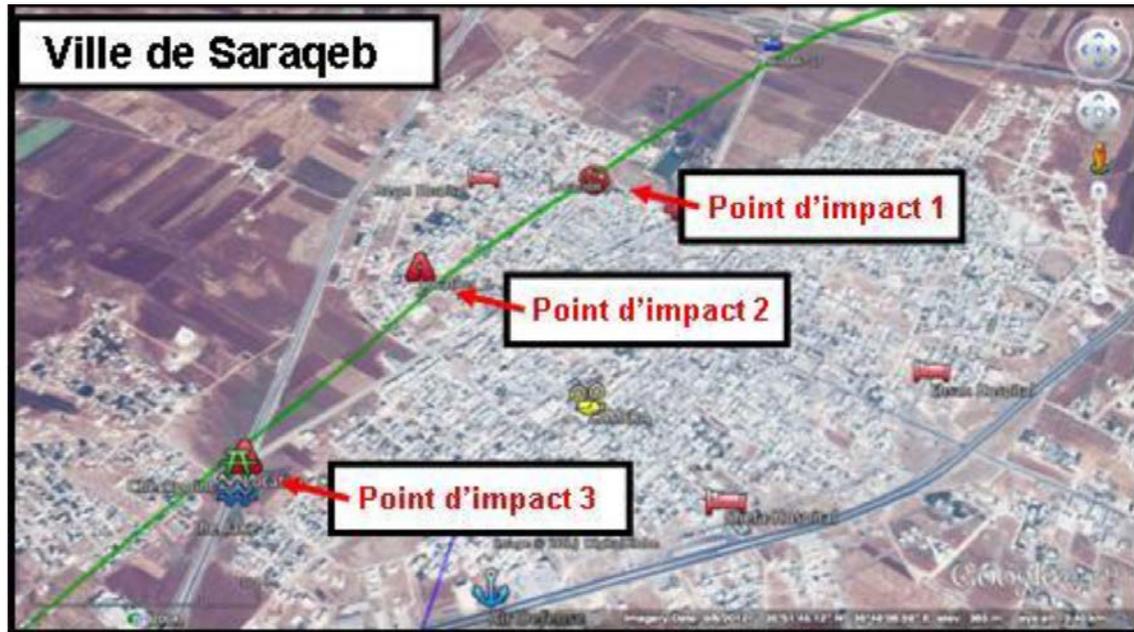
Professor Emeritus of Science,
Technology, and National Security Policy
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Email: postol@mit.edu

Map Showing the Contradictory Narratives in the White House and French Intelligence Reports about Alleged Sarin Attack in Idlib on April 4, 2017



Map Constructed from WHR and the contradicting French Report and Appendix at the Following URL
<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/syria/events/article/chemical-attack-in-syria-national-evaluation-presented-by-jean-marc-ayrault>

Map from the French Intelligence Report Showing the Three Locations Targetted 30 Miles North of Khan Sheikhoun Where a Helicopter Allegedly Dropped Sarin Dispersing Munitions



Inaccurate Assertions in the Appendix of the French Intelligence Report about Findings That the Nerve Agent Attack of August 21, 2013 Had Been Connected by Intelligence Analysis to the Syrian Government

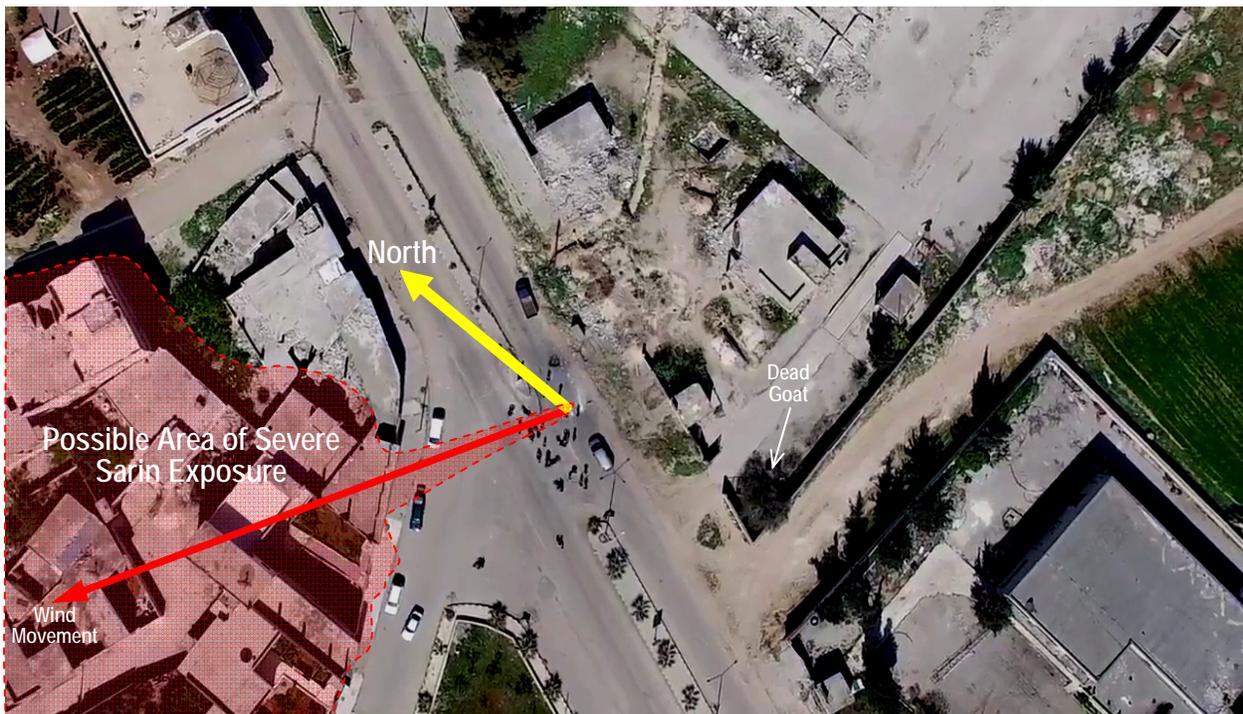
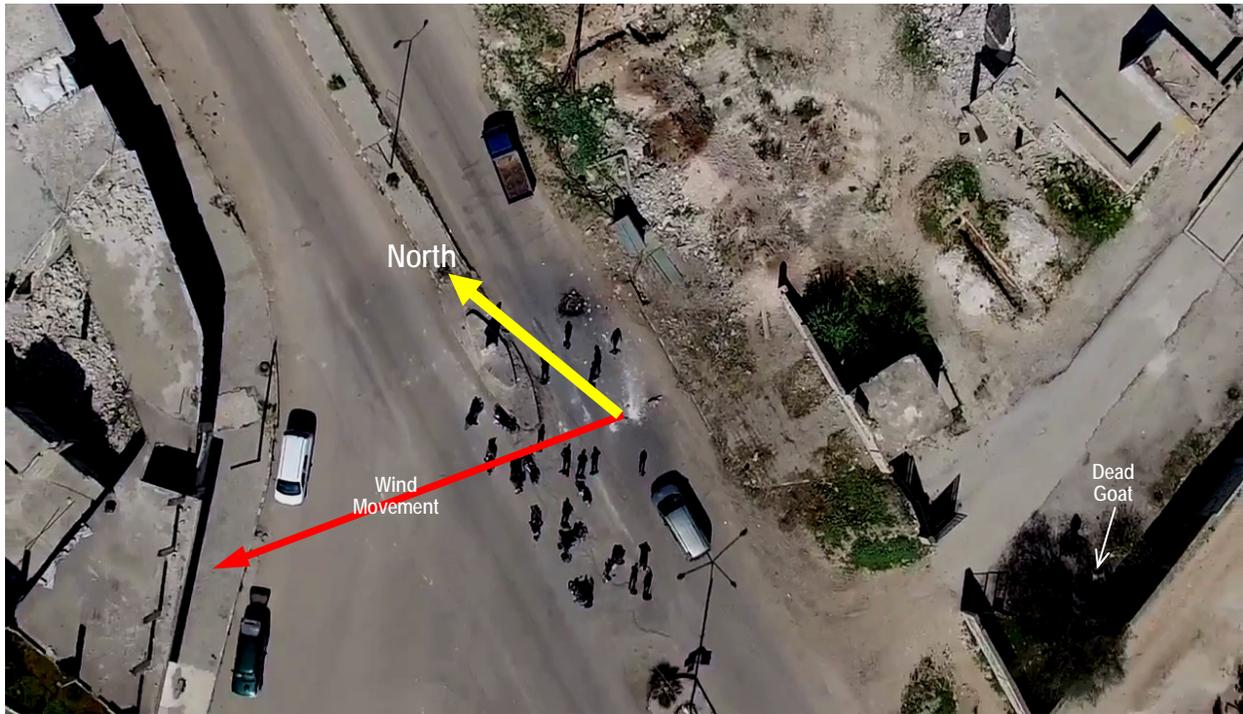
ALLEGATIONS OF USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN SYRIA SINCE 2012

Table legend:

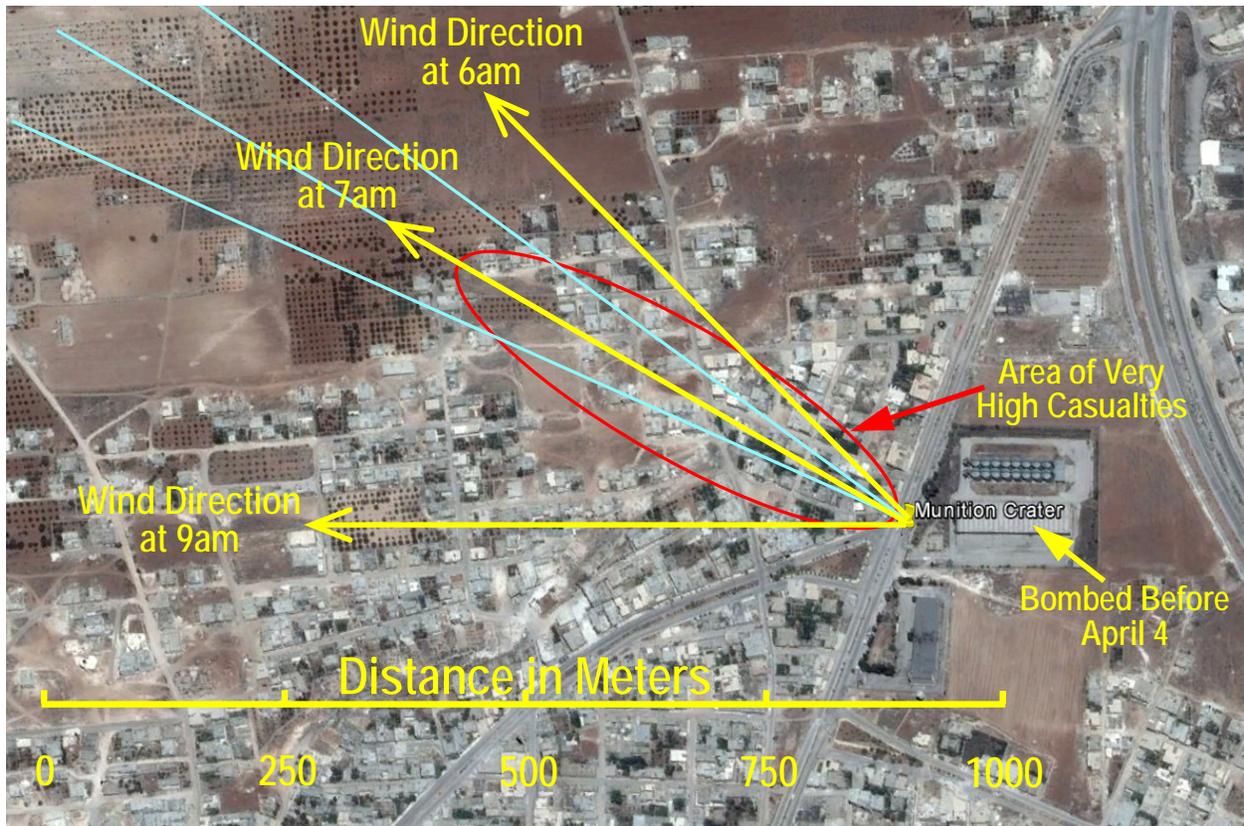
Allegations of use of chemical weapons that the French services have not been able to confirm with great reliability	Use of sarin proven by France through the collection of biomedical and/or environmental samples Attack attributed to the Syrian regime	Strong presumption of use of sarin by the Syrian regime	Strong presumption of the use of chlorine by the Syrian regime	Mustard gas attack attributed to Daesh
--	---	---	--	--

CITY	REGION	DATE	SYMPTOMS OF VICTIMS
Zamalka	East Ghouta	24 June 2013	Tremors, muscle contractions and pupil contraction
Sayyidah Zaynab	South of Damascus	7 July 2013	
Douma	North-east of Damascus	4 August 2013	Breathing difficulties, convulsions and oral mucositis
Damascus		21 August 2013	Pupil contraction, convulsions, respiratory distress, hypersalivation, running noses
Jobar Zamalka	East Ghouta	12 September 2013	Breathing difficulties and hypersalivation
Kafr Zita	Hama	11 April 2014	Suffocation, coughing and disorientation
Jobar	East Ghouta	3 April 2014	
Kafr Zita	Hama	20 April 2014	Coughing and suffocation
Tall Manis		21 April 2014	
Al-Tamanah	Idlib	23 April 2014	Coughing and suffocation

Video Images of the Area where WHR Alleged Sarin-Releasing Crater Was
Extensively Photographed and Reported on by Local Journalists in Khan Sheikhoun



Google Earth Image Showing the Direction of the Toxic Plume from the Sarin-Releasing Crater Alleged by WHR in Khan Sheikhoun



<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/syria/events/article/chemical-attack-in-syria-national-evaluation-presented-by-jean-marc-ayrault>



Home > Country Files > Syria > Events

A+ A- ↻

Chemical Attack in Syria - National Evaluation presented by Jean-Marc Ayrault following the Defense Council Meeting (26 April 2017)