

# Syria

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Kucinich, a Fox News contributor, and Fox News Channel Senior Correspondent Greg Palkot.

The attack precipitated the crisis over Syria's chemical weapons. The U.S. threatened a military strike against Syria, which led to a plan negotiated by Moscow and Washington under which the Assad regime is to abandon its chemical weapons stockpile.

A U.N. report released Monday confirmed that chemical weapons were used in the attack but did not ascribe blame.

The United States, Britain and France cited evidence in the report to declare Assad's government responsible. Russia called the report "one-sided" and says it has "serious reason to suggest that this was a provocation" by the rebels fighting the Assad regime in Syria's civil war.

Assad agreed, saying the scenario of the attack depicted in the report was unrealistic.

"So, the whole story doesn't even hold together," Assad said. "It's not realistic. So, no, we didn't. In one word, we didn't use any chemical weapons in Ghouta, because if you want to use it, you would harm your troops, you would

have harmed the tens of thousands of civilians in Syria, in Damascus."

The report, however, provided data that suggested the chemical-loaded rockets that hit two Damascus suburbs were fired from the northwest, indicating they came from nearby mountains where the Syrian military is known to have major bases.

Mount Qassioum, which overlooks Damascus, is home to one of Assad's three residences and is widely used by elite forces to shell suburbs of the capital. The powerful Republican Guard and army's Fourth Division, headed by Assad's younger brother, Maher, has bases there.

A senior U.N. diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity because some of this material was from private meetings, said: "It was 100 percent clear that the regime used chemical weapons."

The diplomat cited five key details, including the scale of the attack, the quality of the sarin, the type of rockets, the warheads used and the rockets' trajectory.

A Human Rights Watch report also said the presumed flight path of the rockets cited by the U.N. inspectors' report led back to a Republican Guard base in Mount Qassioum.

"Connecting the dots provided by these numbers allows us to see for ourselves where the rockets were likely launched from and who was

responsible," said Josh Lyons, a satellite imagery analyst for the New York-based group. But, he added, the evidence was "not conclusive."

The HRW report matched what several experts concluded after reading the U.N. report. The U.N. inspectors were not instructed to assess which side was responsible for the attack.

"While the U.N. stuck within its mandate, it has provided enough data to provide an overwhelming case that this had to be government-sponsored," said Anthony Cordesman, national security expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The inspectors described the rockets used to disperse the sarin as a variant of an M14 artillery rocket, with either an original or an improvised warhead, which the rebels are not known to have.

There is no conceivable way to prove the rebels could not have gotten them, Cordesman said, but he added that the modification of the rockets pointed to the regime.

The U.N. diplomat in New York pointed to citations in the U.N. report and a private briefing to the U.N. Security Council by chief inspector Ake

Sellstrom that reveal the scale of the attack: The seven rockets examined had a total payload of about 350 liters (about 92 gallons) of sarin, including sophisticated stabilizing elements that match those known to be in the Syrian stockpile.

This makes it "virtually impossible" that it came from any source other than the Syrian government, the diplomat said, adding that there were likely other rockets used that the inspectors couldn't get to.

The diplomat added that the trajectory points directly at known Syrian military bases. "There isn't a shred of evidence in the other direction," he said.

Syrian legislator Issam Khalil denied the Human Rights Watch report.

"These rockets were fired by terrorists in order to draw a military act against Syria," Khalil told The Associated Press in Damascus. "We believe that a fair, transparent and objective international investigation is the only way to specify that side responsible for firing these rockets."

Russia has been Syria's main ally since the conflict began in March 2011, blocking proposed U.N. resolutions

that would impose sanctions on Assad's regime and opposing an attempt to authorize the use of force if Syria does not abide by the agreement struck Sept. 14 between Moscow and Washington to rid Damascus of its chemical weapons stockpile.

According to a top Russian diplomat and a Syrian official, Damascus has turned over materials to Russia that aim to show the chemical weapons attack was carried out by the rebels.

The ITAR-Tass news agency quoted Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying that Syria told Russian officials the material it handed over shows "rebels participating in the chemical attack," but that Moscow has not yet drawn any conclusions.

Ryabkov also told pro-

Kremlin broadcaster Russia Today that Russia has submitted to the U.N. Security Council what Moscow called credible evidence that suggests the Syrian government did not fire the chemical weapons.

"We are unhappy about this (U.N.) report, we think that the report was distorted, it was one-sided, the basis of information upon which it was built is insufficient," Ryabkov said.

The reports did not specify the nature of the new material turned over by Syria to Russia, which Ryabkov said would be closely analyzed.

According to ITAR-Tass, Ryabkov said Russia was "inclined to treat with great seriousness the material from the Syrian side about the involvement of the rebels in the chemical attack of Aug. 21."

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# Stadium

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session. The project can't proceed with legislative approval.

Part of the revenue generated from the 18,000-seat stadium would be used to repay bonds. Regents officials said they want assurance that SDSU's overall sports program continues to receive support from football sales. They also want to see projections on ticket sales over the potentially 25-to 30-year duration of the bonds.

"During that time teams can go through a lot of different cycles," Warner said.

Chicoine said student fees might be part of the answer to supporting the stadium's ongoing operation. "We've just begun having conversations with students about that possibility," he said.

Chicoine agreed that a student-fee increase wasn't part of the initial facility statement submitted to the regents.

Earlier this year the regents decided they want a freeze on general tuition and fees for South Dakota residents at the state universities for fall 2014. The regents plan to ask the Legislature for more financial support instead.

The regents will need to discuss the possible increase of student fees at SDSU for the football stadium, said Monte Kramer, vice president of finance and administration for the university system.

"It may bump into some other priorities we have for the coming year," Warner told Chicoine.

The new stadium would have seating on three sides of its bowl and would offer concessions and restrooms throughout. Coughlin-Alumni Stadium has concessions and restrooms on only its main west side.

The new stadium would have several upper tiers offering reserved suites with operable windows and reserved loge boxes outdoors, along with a club area for people with reserved tickets.

The 2005-era scoreboard would be retained and relocated, while new lights would be installed throughout the stadium complex. The campus police station also would be moved into the complex.

Coughlin-Alumni Stadium hosted its first game Sept. 22, 1962. The first night game was played in 2001. The unofficial capacity is 16,000 fans. The record attendance was 16,345 in 2007 when SDSU hosted North Dakota State. The season record is an average of 13,265 set in 2009.



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