

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://antiwar.com/blog/2013/09/03/is-the-death-count-in-syrias-sarin-attack-phony/print/>

Is the Death Count in Syria's Sarin Attack Phony?

By John Glaser

September 3, 2013

McClatchy has a valuable article ^[1] poking holes in various aspects of the Obama administration's case for war with Syria. In one segment, reporters Hannah Allam and Mark Seibel question the U.S.'s estimate for how many Syrians were killed in the alleged sarin gas attack on August 21.

Another point of dispute is the death toll from the alleged attacks on Aug. 21. Neither Kerry's remarks nor the unclassified version of the U.S. intelligence he referenced explained how the U.S. reached a tally of 1,429, including 426 children. The only attribution was "a preliminary government assessment."

Anthony Cordesman, a former senior defense official who's now with the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, took aim at the death toll discrepancies in an essay published Sunday.

He criticized Kerry as being "sandbagged into using an absurdly over-precise number" of 1,429, and noted that the number didn't agree with either the British assessment of "at least 350 fatalities" or other Syrian opposition sources, namely the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has confirmed 502 dead, including about 100 children and "tens" of rebel fighters, and has demanded that Kerry provide the names of the victims included in the U.S. tally.

"President Obama was then forced to round off the number at 'well over 1,000 people' – creating a mix of contradictions over the most basic facts," Cordesman wrote. He added that the blunder

was reminiscent of “the mistakes the U.S. made in preparing Secretary (Colin) Powell’s speech to the U.N. on Iraq in 2003.”

An unclassified version of a French intelligence report on Syria that was released Monday hardly cleared things up; France confirmed only 281 fatalities, though it more broadly agreed with the United States that the regime had used chemical weapons in the Aug. 21 attack.

Every war necessitates a sales campaign. It is harder to sell a war of choice to the American public and to Congress if the death toll is 281, or 350, than if it is 1,429, “including 426 children.” But even then it’s a stretch given that we’re talking about 0.014% of the total estimated death toll of 100,000.

Then again, this is not a humanitarian war to save the Syrian people. It is being portrayed as one to certain audiences, but a close observer of the administration’s policy will note that Obama is explicitly aiming *not* to incapacitate the Assad regime’s military. The conventional means by which most people have been killed will not be degraded, Obama says, only the delivery systems for chemical weapons.

Odd then that the administration would fib the numbers on this chemical attack then, right? Not exactly. If the public is under the delusion that this is a humanitarian intervention, all the better. Meanwhile, Obama will bring the U.S. to war in a foreign conflict for the sake of his “credibility,” i.e. Iran must continue to believe we’ll bomb them to smithereens.