



## **SCANDAL: The OPCW Syria Cover-up exposed by Investigative Journalist Aaron Mate**

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**Taylor Hudak:** Hi, everyone, and welcome back to another episode of The Source, I'm your host Taylor Hudak. Today, we have a significant development in the OPCW scandal and cover up as it relates to the alleged chemical weapons attack that occurred in April of 2018 in Douma, Syria. Today's guest is a journalist with The Grayzone who has been following this matter very closely and has even testified before the UN on this issue. Joining us today is journalist Aaron Mate. Aaron, thank you for coming on. And welcome back to The Source.

**Aaron Mate:** Thanks for having me.

**TH:** Absolutely. So before we get into the latest developments on this story, could you provide us a background to this scandal, specifically going back to the events in April of 2018?

**AM:** So April 2018, there's claims of a chemical attack in the Syrian city of Douma. Videos are put out showing scores of dead bodies inside of a building. There's also a video of a scene inside of a hospital where people are being hosed down with water. And this was put out by the White Helmets, which is a U.S. and U.K. and Gulf and Turkey backed group. Before the OPCW can get its inspectors into Douma to investigate, the U.S., Britain and France bomb Syria based on the allegations that this was a chemical attack and that the Syrian government was guilty. Then the OPCW gets in, they do an investigation. They put out an interim report in July of 2018 that doesn't really offer much in the way of anything definitive in terms of who was guilty and even what this was. But that changes in March of 2019 when the OPCW puts out a final report where they say that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a chemical weapon took place with chlorine. And the inference of the report is that Syria is, in fact, guilty, because they strongly suggest that gas cylinders that were found at the scene in Douma were dropped from the air. So the inference of the report is that Syria is guilty of a chemical weapons attack. But then shortly afterwards, we get the first of a pretty extraordinary set of leaks from inside the OPCW, which says that contrary to what the OPCW said publicly, the actual

inspectors who went to Syria conducted the investigation, reached a much different conclusion. They actually found no evidence at all of a chemical weapons attack in Douma, including with chlorine. But their findings were censored. There was an original report which the public never saw, which the original team drafted. That report was not only kept from the public, but in fact, people above the inspectors who wrote that report, some unknown senior officials, tried to doctor it and added a whole bunch of new unsupported conclusions. Immediately that pointed blame to the Syrian government, even though all the available evidence contained none of what the senior officials were trying to say. So there was not just a suppression of the original report, but an attempt to doctor it and manipulate it, to say things that the inspectors had not found. Now, that attempt was thwarted to put out this bogus report, but the original report was still suppressed. And that is then what produced the interim report that the public first got in July of 2018. And after that, basically all of the original inspectors who went to Syria and produced the original report, they were removed from the investigation. There was one exception, a paramedic who didn't have really anything to do with the science involved. So all of them were removed and they were replaced by a group of people who did not set foot in Syria. And they were the ones who produced the final report. And from more leaks, we saw that they excluded other key findings that undermined all the claims that the OPCW was saying publicly. So that is this scandal and the response to it has been pretty significant and pretty much as damning as the original cover up, because there's been an attempt by the U.S., Britain and France, the same governments that bomb Syria to suppress this story. So when José Bustani, the first director general of the OPCW, when he came to the UN Security Council this past fall to speak in defense of the OPCW whistleblowers and to criticize the cover up, the U.S. and its allies blocked him from speaking. And there have been other attempts to raise this at the OPCW but the U.S. has tried to thwart all of them. And in parallel to this suppression effort by the U.S. and its allies, the story has been completely silenced in the media. The Grayzone covered it. I wrote one article on this in The Nation magazine. Peter Hitchens, a British journalist, has covered it. But aside from that, there's been a complete media censorship. One exception also is Robert Fisk, the late Robert Fisk, who also wrote about these findings when they were leaked. He died a few months ago. And what's interesting about Fisk is that he was one of the first people to raise skepticism of the claims that there was a chemical attack in Douma, even before the OPCW leaks came out, because Robert Fisk was on the ground in Douma shortly after the April 2018 incident. And he spoke to a doctor who said the patients were not treated for chemical weapons. They were treated for smoke and dust inhalation. And Fisk, of course, was vindicated by these leaks. But the media cover up is almost as shocking to me as the initial cover up, because getting public attention on the story has been very difficult in the face of a media blockade.

**TH:** Of course. And we will get to the media's role in all of this a little bit later. But just to be clear here, the report from March of 2019 coincided with the U.S. narrative, is that correct?

**AM:** Yes. So the U.S. narrative was that Syria was guilty of a chemical attack in Douma. And this report said that there were reasonable grounds to believe that there was a chemical attack in Douma with chlorine as the weapon. And of course, they

couldn't say for sure that there was a chemical attack because they have to use a qualified thing, a qualified term, like reasonable grounds to give them some leeway because they know that they have no conclusive evidence. And what's interesting about this comports with the U.S. narrative is, that one of the other revelations that we got about this cover up is, that in July of 2018, while the investigation was still being conducted shortly after the original report was suppressed and there was this attempt to introduce this bogus replacement. A U.S. delegation visited The Hague, visited the OPCW and tried to lobby the inspection team to conclude that there was a chlorine attack in Douma. And we know from one comment by one of the inspectors to the journalist, Jonathan Steele, the inspectors thought that this was highly inappropriate, that they were being pressured and that it was actually a breach of their confidentiality to come face to face with a state party because these investigations are supposed to be highly protected and secret. So not only did the final report end up validating falsely the U.S. narrative, but there even was a direct U.S. effort to influence that narrative.

**TH:** Now, just to backtrack a little bit, for those who may not be so familiar with this story, what is the role of the OPCW?

**AM:** It's the world's top chemical weapons watchdog. And traditionally, it helps destroy chemical stockpiles and countries deal with accidents, deal with regulations. In Syria, it actually achieved a really remarkable goal where in 2013 it, along with the U.S. and Russia, helped destroy Syria's entire chemical weapons stockpile. And it actually won a Nobel Prize for that. It was a real achievement in international diplomacy. So now, I mean, adding to the tragedy of all this is that now, instead of continuing its legacy of helping peace, now it's being used as a geopolitical tool to justify war. And not just justify one military airstrike on Syria in April of 2018. Now, when the U.S. tries to justify its brutal sanctions on Syria, that are denying food and medicine to Syrian kids when the U.S. tries to justify its military occupation of Syria, it now cites things- like these chemical weapons allegations against the Syrian government. So what we're seeing is, what should be a leader in global diplomacy and undermining war and promoting peace, we're seeing now being used as a tool to do the exact opposite, to promote war, to promote suffering for the Syrian people.

**TH:** In late 2019, WikiLeaks released several internal OPCW documents and emails that casted doubt on the integrity of the investigation, as well as the validity of the report that was released earlier into the alleged chemical attack in Douma. Can you summarize the significance of these leaks and what it showed?

**AM:** It shows that a pro-war lie was exposed and that a manipulation of a global organization to justify war, was also exposed. And what it really exposed is how craven our media is in refusing to report on these leaks. Leaks are the lifeblood of journalists- like when you can get source documents, it's revelatory. And every journalist should have been all over this because there's a trove of these leaks at the OPCW. There's the internal initial email protesting the censorship of the original report. There is a suppressed toxicology study where a NATO member state team of toxicologists were consulted and they looked at the evidence from Douma. They looked at the videos of the victims and they said there's no way that this is from

chlorine. It's just- it's incompatible. That was suppressed. You have the original engineering report that was conducted on the cylinders. That was suppressed. You have other emails protesting significant deletions and censorship from the final report, censorship of the original team's findings. But yet try to find any reporting on this in the U.S. media. Aside from The Grayzone, The Nation, World Socialist Web Site, Mint Press, a few other places, but all these major organizations and even leading so-called adversarial sites like The Intercept and Democracy Now have ignored them. I've never seen anything like it where you have so much evidence on such an extraordinary story. A cover up at the world's top chemical weapons watchdog to justify a U.S. led military strike and to see such a resounding silence and disinterest from the media.

**TH:** Now, just recently on March 11th, the Courage Foundation released a statement of concern which calls on the director general of the OPCW to appropriately address the problems within the organization and to also inform the UN and state parties. Before we get into the significance of the signatories what are the major points outlined in this statement of concern?

**AM:** Well, the statement of concern goes through a number of irregularities in this whole OPCW process. It starts with the doctoring, as I mentioned, of the original report, the censorship of it. So we never saw it until it was leaked. And putting out a report that contained conclusions that were unsupported and that excluded key scientific findings. So that's a major ethical breach and it raises obvious questions about the integrity of that investigation and previous OPCW investigations as well. And then you have developments afterwards, where instead of addressing the issues that have been raised by these leaks and by the dissenting whistleblowers who protested the cover up of their own investigation, the OPCW has refused to meet with them, refused to address substantively any of their concerns, and has even attacked them. So the OPCW has put out public statements containing many falsehoods, trying to cast doubt on the inspectors who challenge the cover up. And what kind of organization are you and how do you expect to be taken seriously if you're not only refusing to weigh the evidence that was suppressed, refusing to meet with the inspectors who challenged the cover up, but are also now attacking them. And on that front, there has been even more deceptive behavior that is coming from the OPCW, although I don't know if it's actually sanctioned by the leadership, but it's happening. Recently, some unnamed or an unnamed, if not more than one, but at least one unnamed OPCW source has been leaking false material in a bid to discredit one of the whistleblowers whose name is Dr. Brendan Whelan. And he was the actual author of the original report. He was a top chemist for 16 years inside the OPCW, and he authored the team's original report. And he was the one who protested once he discovered that it was being censored. So the Bellingcat, which bills itself as this open source investigative website but really- it's a NATO troll farm that spreads disinformation on behalf of the governments that help fund it, including the U.S. and also the UK via something called the Open Information Partnership, which is a euphemism for secret propaganda operations against targeted states like Syria and Russia. So Bellingcat put out this article where they claimed that they had received this letter that was sent to Dr. Whelan, but which Whelan had kept from the public, which, because it undermined all of his concerns and it put forward some

assertions that they, Bellincat, said, contradicted all of his claims. All the claims that he has raised in the leaked emails that we've seen about him protesting the censorship. The problem was, as we showed, that the letter was a fraud. The actual letter that the OPCW sent Whelan, looked nothing like the one that Bellingcat published. And the assertions in Bellingcat's letter were actually easily undermined by the OPCW's own published documents. So somebody put out this letter in a really desperate attempt to make Whelan look bad, but they only further discredited themselves and the OPCW because it showed... because they were trying to say that he had hid this damning letter, that in reality he was never sent. And we showed at The Grayzone the actual letter that Whelan was sent because we got it. So that was a desperate attempt to smear a whistleblower. And that was followed up by a BBC podcast called Mayday, which repeated the exact same claims as Bellingcat. And Mayday even spoke to someone claiming that he is an OPCW employee under a pseudonym named Leon. Now, I don't necessarily believe that that's true because the reporting standards of this BBC podcast were so bad. They were so duplicitous that in trying to prove that a chemical weapons attack in Douma occurred, they omitted their own BBC colleagues reporting, who found that the hospital scene I mentioned earlier, filmed by the White Helmets, this BBC journalist named Riam Dalati, found out the hospital scene filmed by the White Helmets, was staged. He said that and he made that conclusion after months of reporting. But the problem was that the hospital scene and the White Helmets were a big part of this BBC podcast narrative. So they simply omitted their own colleagues reporting from their own narrative. And that was among many journalistic lapses that they conducted in a bid to try to prove that a chemical attack occurred in Douma. And so they also interviewed this person claiming that he's from the OPCW. I'm not necessarily convinced that's true. But regardless, here is an attempt by people at least claiming to work for the OPCW, to spread false information about their own inspectors. So that is just some of the issues that this letter took issue with. And they make the point that- it's simply not credible for an international organization to tolerate, not just ignoring its own inspectors, but then sanctioning attacks on them and false attacks on them in a bid to discredit them. It's unbelievable. And, of course, Dr. Brendan Whelan's name was doxed by several journalists who, with apparent access to the OPCW- this guy, Brian Whitaker, who is a fervent supporter of the dirty war on Syria- he was given Dr. Brendan Whelan's name about a year ago. And so he doxed Whelan. Bellingcat did the same thing as well. So you have people apparently inside the OPCW spreading malicious lies about the OPCW whistleblowers and even putting their safety at risk. So these are some of the issues this Courage Foundation letter took issue with. And the significant thing about the Courage Foundation letter is that on top of notable people like Noam Chomsky and Daniel Ellsberg, Tulsi Gabbard, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, who knows firsthand what pro-war deceptions look like because he worked for the Bush administration in the lead up to the Iraq war. You have five former OPCW officials signing this letter, five, not just José Bustani, the former OPCW chief who was blocked by the U.S. from speaking at the UN Security Council, but four others. So there's obviously some concern now from people who've been with the OPCW, who know its value to the world, who know what its mission should be, to see it being compromised in such a nefarious way.

**TH:** It's very clear that there are multiple entities who are involved in this scandal and in this cover up. But, Aaron, before we do continue with our discussion, I want to take a short pause. And when we return, we will continue discussing the OPCW cover up and specifically on the broader implications here. But before that, check out this commercial.

-BREAK-

**TH:** Thanks for sticking with us and welcome back to The Source. OK, Aaron, so I do want to touch on some of the broader implications with this story here. As you mentioned, it, of course, has not been covered in the media as much as it should or if at all. But before that, why is this scandal relevant to a Western audience?

**AM:** It's relevant because do we want to be bombing foreign countries based on lies and do we want to tolerate having our government bully international organizations to go along with their pro-war narratives and do we want to justify taking medicine and food away from Syrian children and destroying their economy on top of all the other destruction that we've imposed in their country after a ten year dirty war, by invoking fake allegations. So it's of utmost importance. I mean, these are the lies that wars are based on. So we have- it's critical that they be exposed and it's a part of what has been a growing trend among war mongers in the last two decades, where especially after the Iraq war, it's increasingly more difficult to mobilize consent for a legal warfare. So you have to try to convince people that there's some sort of dire humanitarian urgency to doing so. And this is a playbook that goes back a long time. In the first Gulf War, the U.S. government put up this stunt, where the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador came and testified before Congress, hiding that she was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador, and said falsely that there were babies being torn out of incubators in Kuwait by Iraqi soldiers. In Libya they sold it to us by saying that we had to bomb Libya because Gadhafi was giving Viagra to his troops to commit mass rape. And in Syria the same thing, on professed humanitarian grounds we've been told that we have to bomb Syria after chemical weapons allegations like this and we also have to not question our government spending billions of dollars through the CIA on a dirty war that empowered groups like al-Qaeda in destroying the country. So these fake humanitarian pretexts are now really the prime engine for manufacturing public consent for war and also for sanctions. So even after the war is over in Syria, for the most part, the U.S. side lost. Now, the U.S. government and its allies are trying to punish the Syrian people for the fact that their government won the war and are trying to basically squeeze the Syrian people into submission and to maybe, enough suffering that they might turn on their government and overthrow them as the U.S. tries to do everywhere. And narratives like this, these chemical weapons allegations are crucial to trying to maintain that savage policy. So it's very important that they be exposed. And what is unique about this OPCW story is that we usually don't have as much evidence as we do in this case. In this case, the evidence is overwhelming. There's a trove of documents. We usually don't get that until much later on. So 50 years from now, we'll get documents released that prove that all the suspicions of, you know, of dissidents and critics were vindicated. It's happened so many times, but in this case with Syria and the OPCW, it's right here.

Right now. We have the documents, we have the evidence. We even have whistleblowers who have spoken out.

**TH:** Now, we have so much evidence that is publicly available, however, as you said, the media is silent on this story. However, you did go on to Tucker Carlson and that has been a place where you have been able to speak honestly about these issues. Are you surprised by that? And why is the media silent?

**AM:** Well, it's a really sad commentary on the state of our media, and particularly, I would say, our progressive media. I'm talking about, especially outlets like Democracy Now, The Intercept, Young Turks, whoever else presents himself as being progressive and is considered to be a part of the progressive community. Especially for me, it's sad because I worked at Democracy Now for over a decade and I learned so much about journalism from Democracy Now. But they've completely ignored the story. And the few times they've acknowledged it, they've gotten it totally wrong. And that's unfortunately part of a trend that we've seen where leftist media in, for the most part, there are some brave exceptions, has been duped really successfully into going along with the pro-war narratives that they used to challenge, especially a place like Democracy Now. And so it's sad that Tucker Carlson, a right wing TV show host, does a better job of covering a crucial pro-war deception like this than Democracy Now.

**AM in TV:** The facts here are overwhelming. The original OPCW team that went to Syria did not find any evidence of a chemical weapons attack in Douma. They wrote up their findings in a report. That report was suppressed and kept from the public. They were then removed from the investigation and replaced by officials who would never set foot in Syria, who then put out a final report that excluded the key scientific findings of the original team and reached unsupported conclusions. And this is not just an allegation from two whistleblowers. It's documented in a damning series of leaks that have come out, that were given to WikiLeaks. We've gotten some, too, at The Grayzone, and they show in great detail what happened here, what a cover up this was, and anybody can see the facts for themselves.

**AM:** I never would have predicted that this would be the case. It's pretty unfortunate. And that's unfortunately- it's a part of a war on Syria. You know, a lot of people got duped by the deluge of propaganda that we got to manufacture consent for the dirty war. Now, I don't fully fault everyone for that because I myself was convinced by some of this propaganda a few years ago. And I only changed my views on Syria after doing some heavy reading. And on Libya even back at the time. I remember thinking that the U.S. was being manipulative, but I, at least I thought that the pretext of there was possibly going to be a massacre in Benghazi by Gaddafi, I thought that was plausible. But really, of course, it turns out that everything was exaggerated by the U.S. and deliberately, so they could get a UN Security Council resolution authorizing them to go in under this limited supposed mandate, which they then exploited to wage a full on regime change war. And we know the result. Now, Libya has been destroyed and slavery has returned to Libya thanks to the U.S. and its allies. So I don't think people are corrupt in their complete abdication of responsibility and of abandonment of minimal journalism standards in covering stories like this, I

just think that they've been duped and they haven't applied critical thinking to the most important stories. Because, look, it's very easy now to oppose the Israeli occupation of Palestine. I mean, who doesn't? You have to be a monster to support that and to be duped by that. But where we need our media most is where the rest of the media is still manufacturing consent and where most of the public just hasn't been informed, as they have on stories like Israel and Palestine, where most people now know the reality. But instead of that, you're seeing media outlets that should be challenging power, covering up for it and going along with that. And we saw that with Syria. We also saw that with Russiagate, where so many people that should know better got duped.

**TH:** Your recent report on Pushback, you brought up a really interesting point that I want you to expand further on. You said that this story does say a lot about how we treat whistleblowers because the whistleblowers who expose this information were targeted and they were attacked not only by the OPCW, but also by the U.S., the UK and France. So what message are we sending to whistleblowers and how will this impact our ability to have access to truthful information?

**AM:** We're sending a message that if you touch a third rail, which is exposing our pro-war deceptions in countries like Syria, where we spent billions of dollars on a murderous, dirty war, if you touch that, if you expose that, we're going to ignore you and we're even going to sit back, even as your life is put in danger. Because, look, it is perilous, to say the least, to have your name linked to a story that exposes a massive pro-war deception waged by the most powerful states in the world. These whistleblowers are in danger. We know what happens to whistleblowers. They get threatened, they get intimidated, their careers get targeted. And so for the media to collectively yawn and say, we don't care about your story- what they're saying is we would rather be outpost's for U.S. state propaganda than defend whistleblowers, which exposes how committed these outlets really are to whistleblowers. And what's interesting to me is, look, I would just go back to the same point, I would expect this behavior from corporate media outlets. This is what they've done forever. They always target people who contradict the holy state. I would never expect this from outlets that have traditionally portrayed themselves as being adversarial and as defending whistleblowers. Democracy Now, its moniker is breaking the sound barrier, the exception to the rulers. The Intercept and its mission statement talks about how it champions whistleblowers. Where, well, where have they been on the most important whistleblowing story? A whistleblower story in recent memory. Silent, completely silent. So it's shameful. And it sends a very, very chilling message that we're only going to champion whistleblowers if they stay within certain bounds. If they actually expose pro-war deceptions, then they're off limits. And this sends a message to whistleblowers that have taken risks. And it also sends a message to future whistleblowers, too, that if you take the risk of challenging cover ups, like on the scale of this one, then you're not going to have the media backing you up. Because that is what sometimes can save people's lives. And saving them from harm is having sunlight on their story, a spotlight from the media shining a light on the facts. Here the media is saying, you know, we're not even going to touch it.



**TH:** I want to shift our focus just for a moment here, since you covered Russiagate the past several years. Could you provide your assessment on the latest comments made by President Biden about Putin, in particular, Biden said that Putin will pay a price for his interference in the 2020 election. How do you see U.S. Russia relations developing over these next four years?

**AM:** Well, you know what's interesting about that clip? So, George Stephanopoulos of ABC basically tries to corner Biden into calling Putin a killer and to get him to commit to having Putin pay some kind of price. So I almost feel some sympathy for Biden here because he was kind of put in a corner.

**George Stephanopoulos:** The Director of National Intelligence came out with a report today saying that Vladimir Putin authorized operations during the election to denigrate you, support President Trump, undermine our elections, divide our society. What price must he pay?

**President Biden:** He will pay a price. We had a long talk, he and I. I know him relatively well. And the conversation started off, I said, I know you and you know me. If I establish that this occurred, then be prepared.

**GS:** You said, you know, he doesn't have a soul.

**Biden:** I did say that to him. Yes. And his response was, we understand one another. I wasn't being a wise guy. I was alone with him in his office. That's how it came about. It was when President Bush had said, I've looked in his eyes and I saw his soul. I said, look through your eyes and I don't think you have a soul. And he looked back and he said, we understand each other. Look, the most important thing dealing with foreign leaders in my experience and I've dealt with an awful lot of them in my career, is just- know the other guy.

**GS:** So, you know, Vladimir Putin- you think he's a killer?

**Biden:** Hmm. I do.

**GS:** So what price must he pay?

**Biden:** The price he's going to pay? Well, you'll see shortly.

**AM:** And of course, he also has his own predilection for painting himself as a tough guy. So I think he took the bait pretty easily. But in the clip, he also talks about cooperating with Russia and talks about how, which is true, his first active as president on the foreign policy front was to renew the new START treaty, which is a good thing, I think. It was a major nuclear weapons accord that was about to expire. And if it had, it would have probably set off or it could have likely set off a new nuclear arms race between the U.S. and Russia. So Biden did do that, which I think we should welcome. But then, of course, yeah, Biden's also been bellicose and he's certainly not standing up to this pressure on him from outlets like ABC News and George Stephanopoulos and the wider media to act like a tough guy, to pretend to

be a tough guy and be bellicose toward Russia. So where things exactly will go, I'm not sure. You know, you have mixed signals. A positive step was renewing New Start. Donald Trump almost killed New Start for all the talk about Trump being Putin's puppet. And because Trump wouldn't say mean things about Vladimir Putin, the U.S. establishment had this constant freak out. But in reality, Trump's policies were incredibly hawkish. And I'd be surprised if Biden can be even more hawkish than Trump. Because on every major issue, Trump was a major Russia hawk and seriously worsened the dangers that come from tensions between the world's top nuclear armed powers. But do I expect anything positive from Biden? Not really. He's continuing Trump's sanctions and coup attempt in Venezuela, which is a top Russian ally in Latin America. He's not even returning to the Iran nuclear deal, continuing Trump's policy, at least for now. He's continuing the U.S. military occupation of Syria and the sanctions on Syria. He declined recently to impose sanctions on Germany that would undermine the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline between Germany and Russia, because Germany was just so opposed to it and it's a major important project for Germany. Ironically, again, that's a project that Trump tried to stop with his sanctions, which, again, we don't talk about, because that undermined the narrative that Trump is really doing Putin's bidding. So there are a couple of things you can look at and say, actually, Biden is not that bad. But in terms of their rhetoric from the administration and in terms of overall their policies, I don't see a big shift away from the predominant Cold War mentality, which is basically to saber rattle against Russia. Not to defend against any real threats, but to justify U.S. hegemony and to justify massive expenditures on weapons and other tools of warfare.

**TH:** And lastly, just to go back to this statement of concern, as you said, it included several noteworthy signatories, including five former OPCW officials. Do you think that we are perhaps any closer to seeing some accountability here or some reform within the OPCW?

**AM:** That depends entirely on whether media outlets, especially in the U.S., can develop the minimal courage and integrity to cover the story. Without any media pressure, without any media coverage the OPCW will get the very clear signal that the public is never going to know about this because the media is keeping it from them and thus they will have no incentive at all to reform internally, no matter how many prominent people protest. The media is sending an overwhelming message that it would rather serve as propaganda outlets than do its job. And so that's why I encourage anyone watching this, if you want to see this story attain some public consciousness beyond the limited spaces that talk about it, like The Grayzone and your outlet and others, that I would pressure your media outlets to cover the story. I would especially pressure progressive media outlets which are susceptible to pressure. I worked at Democracy Now for ten years, so I know that we listen to our audience. So if you want to see this story covered, I would pressure media outlets, especially progressive outlets, to cover it and stop ignoring it, stop ignoring what is such a critical story. And maybe that can help shift some people at the OPCW and help create some change, some much needed attention to the story. And giving this story its justice, exposing a pro-war deception and giving the inspectors who challenged it, the attention that they deserved and the chance that they deserved to air the science that was censored.

**TH:** OK, excellent insight, Aaron Mate. Thank you.

**AM:** Thanks, Taylor.

**TH:** Absolutely. Thank you. And I want to thank you all for tuning in to this episode of The Source. Make sure that you are subscribed to our YouTube channel if you aren't already and hit the bell so you're notified each time we upload a new video. And if you like the work that we do here at AcTVism, please donate to our organization so we can continue with our independent news and analysis. Now, before I do close out, I do want to make you all aware of an event taking place on Tuesday, March 23rd at 6:30 pm GMT. I will be participating in a Don't Extradite Assange campaign event called "Lightning Talks: The Assange case- Next Steps". I will be speaking alongside CIA torture whistleblower John Kiriakou, a member of the European Parliament, Clare Daily, British journalist Peter Osborne and Iraqi Democrat Sami Ramadani. I frequently reference the work of the DEA campaign in my Julian Assange case updates, so if you can, please subscribe to our YouTube channel and I'll link it down below. And if you can attend the event on Tuesday, I will see you all there. Now, that's all I have for this video. Again, thank you for watching The Source and I'll see you all next time.

**END**