



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Turnbull and Bishop should apologise to Russia for rushing to judgement on British lies

The admission by the UK's chemical weapons lab that it can't verify the source of the alleged nerve agent blamed for poisoning Sergei and Yulia Skripal means that the Australian government expelled Russian diplomats on false information.

There is no excuse for the Australian government's actions. They acted on the word of the British government, without evidence, which they would claim was a reasonable thing to do, Britain being a close ally, except for this fact: *the British government and intelligence agencies are known liars!*

This was the lesson of the 2003 invasion of Iraq on the lies of weapons of mass destruction, most of which were fabricated by British intelligence under orders from Tony Blair, to be cited as evidence by the Bush-Cheney regime. In 2011 British intelligence told similar lies to justify the regime-change interventions that turned Libya into a failed state, and would have done the same to Syria had Russia not intervened in 2015. Wise heads learn from such catastrophes. For instance, while Australia's politicians danced to the British tune from the other side of the world, Theresa May's government was unable to fool the UK's own alternative prime minister, Opposition Leader Jeremy Corbyn, who saw through the previous lies on Iraq, Libya and Syria, and had the sense to demand evidence that Russia was the perpetrator before supporting a dangerous geopolitical escalation. For his good sense, Corbyn was attacked by the British government and media as a Russian stooge—the BBC even doctored an image of Corbyn to make him look Russian standing in front of the Kremlin, yet they have the gall to call the Russia Today channel government propaganda.

Meanwhile Malcolm Turnbull and Julie Bishop, with the support of Bill Shorten, took the May government at its word, and made a big show of expelling two Russian diplomats, complete with Julie Bishop's grandstanding hectoring of the Russian ambassador in front of TV cameras. In a 15 March Doorstop interview at Parliament House, Canberra Julie Bishop told media, "The Australian government shares the outrage of the British government over the use of a military grade nerve agent, *developed by Russia*, which was used in an attempted assassination in the United Kingdom." Up to that point, the UK government had been careful to only say that the nerve agent was "of a type *developed by Russia*", leaving it up to spooks masquerading as journalists, and other governments like Australia's, to drop the nuance and assert the chemical came from Russia. On 19 March, UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson also dropped the nuance in an interview with German TV channel DW. Asked how Britain managed to determine so quickly that Russia was the source of the nerve agent, Johnson replied: "The people from Porton Down, the laboratory, *they were absolutely categorical*. And I asked the guy, myself, 'Are you sure?' *And he said, 'There's no doubt.'*" (Emphasis added.)

Lies, lies, lies! Johnson was referring to Porton Down, the UK's top secret Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, which, curiously, is located just a few miles from Salisbury where the Skripals were allegedly poisoned, and [has its own dark history](#). On 3 April, the chief executive of Porton Down Gary Aitkenhead told Sky News the lab had not determined it was made in Russia. "We were able to identify it as novichok, to identify that it was a military-grade nerve agent", he said. "*We have not verified the precise source*, but we have provided the scientific information to the Government who have then used a number of other sources to piece together the conclusions that they have come to. ... *it is not our job to then say where that actually was manufactured.*" (Emphasis added.)

According to the 4 April *Guardian*, Jeremy Corbyn commented that Aitkenhead's admissions meant Boris Johnson had egg on his face and serious questions to answer. He added: "Either the foreign secretary has information that he's not sharing with Porton Down or it was a bit of exaggeration. I don't know which it is, but I think we need a responsible, cool approach to this. We need to get to the source of this to prevent it ever happening again." In response Johnson accused Corbyn of playing Moscow's game and choosing "to side with Russia's spin machine". But the same day Johnson's department, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which includes the masters of intelligence fabrication MI6, deleted a tweet from 22 March that had stated: "Porton Down made clear that this was a military-grade novichok nerve agent produced in Russia."

Dangerous Allies

This is an issue for the general public to take stock of, and not just leave to politicians and media “experts”. These lies are targeted at the public, and calculated to be believed by a population that for almost two decades has been fed a non-stop diet of accusations against Russia and Vladimir Putin. The prejudices formed by these accusations were on display in the disgusting Australian media performance during the 28 March press conference with the Russian Ambassador to Canberra, Grigory Logvinov, in which journalists peppered him with insults about domestic affairs in Russia that were baseless, but clearly believed by the ignorant reporters. It is incumbent on the public to stop believing liars—the Anglo-American intelligence apparatus that the late former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser called our [*Dangerous Allies*](#), the title of his 2014 book.

The British government and its allies among other governments and the media are trying to sweep the exposure of Boris Johnson’s lie under the carpet, and double down on their disinformation campaign. This must not be tolerated; otherwise we will be repeating the mistakes that led to Australia being an accomplice in the Iraq war crime, but this time with the danger of nuclear world war. The Citizens Electoral Council calls on the Australian government to distance itself from the British government’s lies, and apologise to the Russian embassy for its misinformed rush to judgement and mistreatment of Russia’s diplomats.