

It's Coming: US Finalizing Plans for Military Strike on Syria?

By [RT](#)

Global Research, September 02, 2013

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Two unnamed White House officials told the Associated Press that the Obama administration is still deciding on what Syrian targets will be attacked and to what degree during a military strike that now seems inevitable.

While the strike itself will be conducted only after the White House presents the public with what it believes is “undeniable” proof of chemical weapon use carried out by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, intelligence agencies and policy makers are struggling to decide what goals they hope to achieve by launching an attack.

One of the officials granted anonymity to speak to the AP said, “If there is action taken, it must be clearly defined what the objective is and why” and based on “clear facts.” Meanwhile, another official briefed on a potential strike told the Los Angeles Times that the White House may opt for an attack “just muscular enough not to get mocked,” but one that wouldn’t be severe enough to warrant a response from Syrian allies Iran and Russia.

“They are looking at what is just enough to mean something, just enough to be more than symbolic,” the Times quoted the source as saying.

President Obama [said](#) Wednesday evening he has not made a decision on whether to order a strike in Syria, although he said the US has concluded that the Syrian government carried out recent chemical weapons attacks near Damascus.

“We have not yet made a decision, but the international norm against the use of chemical weapons needs to be kept in place,” Obama said in an interview with PBS.

“If we are saying in a clear and decisive but very limited way, we send a shot across the bow saying, stop doing this, that can have a positive impact on our national security over the long term,” he said, stressing a “limited, tailored” approach in Syria to avoid an open-ended conflict.

The US and its allies already have enough resources throughout the region to strike Syria at any moment. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel [said](#) earlier this week that the American military “was in place to be able to fulfill and comply with whatever option the president wishes to take.” Once Pres. Obama authorizes a strike, he said, US forces were “ready to go, like that.”



The US Navy announced Wednesday it has added another aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf region. The USS Truman in the Arabian Sea has joined the USS Nimitz, in the Indian Ocean.

Leading White House officials have said previously that a strike will likely be launched with the use of American ships mobilized in the Mediterranean Sea, but Reuters reported that additional firepower could be called up from across Europe and Asia.

According to Reuters, the US may be assisted by a French aircraft carrier, at least one French submarine or ship and at least one British cruise missile-carrying nuclear submarine ready to deploy in the Mediterranean. Additionally, the US has F-16 fighter jets ready to fly over Syria and strike from the sky, and has air-defense Patriot missiles adjacent to both Syria's northern and southern borders. NATO maintains Patriot missiles to the north in Turkey, and the US has an arsenal of their own to the south in Jordan left behind following a [military exercise](#) there earlier this year.

Between the US and its European allies, military bases in Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Cyprus and Turkey could all be utilized as well for the limited strike once it is officially ordered to occur.

On Tuesday, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem said his country would use "*all means available*" to defend against a US strike.

"We have the means to defend ourselves and we will surprise everyone," he said Tuesday, according to the AP. *"We will defend ourselves using all means available. I don't want to say more than that,"* he added.

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