

Trump Had Contemplated Ordering the Assassination of Bashar al-Assad

By [Nauman Sadiq](#)

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Donald Trump [disclosed](#) [1] in the morning show Fox and Friends yesterday that he contemplated assassinating Syrian President Bashar al-Assad following an alleged chemical weapons attack in April 2017 in Khan Sheikhoun, a strategic town in northwest Idlib province that has recently been liberated by the Syrian army, but then-Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis opposed the idea.

"I would have rather taken him out. I had him all set," Trump said. "Mattis didn't want to do it. Mattis was a highly overrated general, and I let him go."

Since then-President Obama's warning in 2013 that the use of chemical weapons was a "red line" for him, several false flag sarin attacks have been staged by terrorists themselves to enforce a US-led no-fly zone, a la Libya, over Syria, too.

After the purported chemical weapons strike in April 2017, a "visibly moved and tearful" Donald Trump appeared on television to make a momentous announcement, saying, "the attack has crossed a lot lines for me." While making the statement, however, he was standing next to King Abdullah of Jordan who supported the terrorists in Syria.

According to an informative [December 2013 report](#) [2] from a newspaper affiliated with the UAE government which takes the side of Syrian opposition against the Syrian government, it is clearly spelled out that Syrian militants got arms and training through a secret command center based in the intelligence headquarters' building in Amman, Jordan that was staffed by high-ranking military officials from 14 countries, including the US, European nations, Israel and the Gulf Arab States to wage a covert war against the government in Syria.

Following the alleged chemical weapons attack in Khan Sheikhoun in April 2017, the US launched 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at al-Shayrat airfield in Homs governorate from where the Syrian plane allegedly took off to the chemical weapons strike site in northwest Idlib province.

And a year later on April 7, 2018, another false flag chemical weapons attack was staged in Douma. Couple of days later, on April 11, Trump tweeted: "Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and 'smart!' You shouldn't be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!"

After Trump's advisers drew his attention to the fact that he might have telegraphed his intentions of bombing Syria to the Russians, one of the "smartest" American presidents ever came up with an even more puerile tweet the next day, saying:

"Never said when an attack on Syria would take place. Could be very soon or not so soon at all! In any event, the United States, under my Administration, has done a great job of ridding the region of ISIS. Where is our Thank you America?"

The fact was that during the week before the alleged chemical weapons strike, Donald Trump was so distracted by the FBI's raid on the office of his attorney Michael Cohen and the release of former FBI director James Comey's tell-all book that he had paid scant attention to what had happened in Syria. He kept fulminating about those two issues throughout the week before the strike on his Twitter timeline and mentioned the alleged Douma chemical weapons attack in Syria on April 7, 2018, only in the passing.

Even though Trump's former babysitter Jim Mattis, then the Secretary of Defense, admitted on the record that though he was sure chlorine was used in the attack in Douma, he was not sure who carried out the attack and whether any other toxic chemical agent, particularly sarin, was used in the attack.

In fact, a subsequent OPCW report in July 2018 clarified that no nerve agents were used in the attack. If chlorine can be classified as a chemical weapon, then how is one supposed to categorize white phosphorous which was used by the US military in large quantities in its battle against the Islamic State in Raqqa?

Despite scant evidence as to the use of chemical weapons or the party responsible for it, Donald Trump ordered another cruise-missile strike in Syria a week after the alleged chemical weapons attack in Douma in collaboration with then-Theresa May government in the UK and the Emmanuel Macron administration in France.

In the cruise-missile strikes on April 14, 2018, against a scientific research facility in the Barzeh district of Damascus and two alleged chemical weapons storage facilities in Homs, 105 total cruise missiles were deployed, 85 were launched by the US, 12 by France and 8 by the UK aircraft.

It bears mentioning that the American air and missile strikes in Syria are not only illegal under the international law but are also unlawful according to the American laws. While striking the Islamic State targets in Iraq and Syria, Washington availed itself of the war on terror provisions in the US laws, known as the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), but those laws do not give the president the power to order strikes against the Syrian government targets without prior approval of the US Congress which has the sole authority to declare war.

The Intercept [reported last year](#) [3] that the Trump administration had derived the authority to strike the Syrian government targets based on a "top secret" memorandum of the Office of Legal Counsel that even the US Congress couldn't see. Complying with the norms of transparency and the rule of law were never the strong points of the American democracy but the Trump administration has done away with even the pretense of accountability and checks and balances in the conduct of international relations.

In conclusion, the only reason the Pentagon advised the “toddler-in-chief” against committing the folly of ordering the assassination of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was that American forces were waging a military campaign against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq in 2017.

Although the Syrian government has tolerated against its wishes the presence of US troops in eastern Syria fighting alongside Kurds, had Trump ordered the assassination of the Syrian president, it would have amounted to a declaration of an all-out war, making it impossible to maintain the presence of US forces not only in Syria but also in Iraq.

It’s worth pointing out here that although Trump did order the assassination of revered Iranian General Qassem Soleimani on January 3, by the time the US had already wrapped up anti-ISIS campaigns in Raqqa and Mosul. Whereas in 2017, the Pentagon had deployed tens of thousands of American troops across vast swathes of Syria and Iraq, ensuring their safety could have become an impossible task had Trump ordered the assassination of Bashar al-Assad.

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Nauman Sadiq is an Islamabad-based attorney, columnist and geopolitical analyst focused on the politics of Af-Pak and Middle East regions, neocolonialism and petro-imperialism. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Notes

[1] Syria calls US a ‘rogue state’ over Trump’s kill al-Assad plan:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/09/syria-calls-rogue-state-trump-kill-al-assad-plan-200916185541951.html>

[2] Syrian rebels get arms and advice through secret command center in Amman:

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/syrian-rebels-get-arms-and-advice-through-secret-command-centre-in-amman>

[3] Donald Trump ordered Syria strike based on a secret legal justification even Congress can’t see:

<https://theintercept.com/2018/04/14/donald-trump-ordered-syria-strike-based-on-a-secret-legal-justification-even-congress-cant-see/>

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