



Written by [Kurt Williamsen](#) on May 8, 2017

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## Why Ask Why in U.S. Attack on Syria

U.S. President Donald Trump has taken what some are calling bold action in launching 59 cruise missiles at a Syrian air base in retaliation for a chemical weapons attack on Tuesday, April 4 in Syria. That chemical attack reportedly left 80 Syrians dead and hundreds more injured and has been blamed on the Syrian government led by Bashar al-Assad.

The questions all Americans should be asking is, “Why did Trump call for the attack? What did he hope to achieve? And will such an attack likely have good ends?”

Trump claimed the attack was in the “vital national security interest” of the United States. But is it?

First, the United States is not at war with Syria, nor has Syria committed an aggressive act against the United States, and such an attack is illegal under international law and the U.S. Constitution. So how was it in U.S. interests?

Second, Syria has claimed that it did not drop chemicals weapons on its own people; it merely attacked a chemical weapons facility held by Islamic radicals, which caused the release of chemicals. And, in truth, groups such as ISIS have taken over chemical weapons facilities, and there is evidence that such groups have used chemical weapons in the past. Also, no investigation has been undertaken to see which side is responsible for the recent chemical attack.

Third, since Russia strongly backs Assad, the cruise missile attack is sure to create tensions between the United States and that country. How does that help the United States or the world?

Fourth, if such an attack is justifiable when innocents are killed by a government, isn't it reasonable that the United States should be attacked because it kills hundreds — if not thousands — of innocent Afghans, Yemenis, Iraqis, and others via drones and planes? And if gruesome deaths and international standards are a concern, shouldn't America be attacked because it used white phosphorus shells on heavily populated areas when it attacked Fallujah in the Iraq War, which is against international law? White phosphorus burns skin, and even burns down to the bone. Survivors of such attacks often look as if they have been partially melted. And in the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. military used “Mark 77” incendiary devices, which kill and destroy by burning and are very similar to Vietnam-era napalm bombs, though napalm is illegal under international law. Too, Israel has used white phosphorus bombs in civilian areas multiple times since 2006, yet the United States has *not* bombed it for its war atrocities. For more on this see a February 4, 2015 article on The Intercept entitled “Burning Victims to Death: Still a Common Practice.”

Fifth, since evidence shows that if the United States helps push out al-Assad from leadership that an equally violent or more violent person or group will lead Syria, how are we aiding the Syrian people by attacking Assad? In a similar scenario, since the time that the United States pushed dictator Moammar Gadhafi from power in Libya, that country has been torn by civil war and mass atrocities. The same power vacuum and war crimes would assuredly happen in Syria if Assad falls, as all the leading contenders to take over that country are barbaric Islamic radicals. Also, in Afghanistan, into which the United States has almost literally poured troops and money, the government backed by the United States controls only small areas of that country; the remainder is controlled by Islamic radicals. Wouldn't it be, in fact, helpful to the Syrian people to aid in bringing the civil war to an end with Assad still in charge?



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Sixth, why is the United States picking on Syria's leader for supposed atrocities, even arming Assad's Islamic radical opponents, when there are many countries throughout the world where atrocities occur on a far grander scale, and the United States does nothing? According to a 2013 *USA Today* article entitled "20 facts about North Korea":

Between 150,000 and 200,000 North Koreans live in prison camps surrounded by electrified fencing, according to South Korean government estimates and Human Rights Watch. The worst camps are for those who commit political crimes, and offenders can have their entire extended family imprisoned with them. As many as 40% of camp prisoners die from malnutrition while doing mining, logging and agricultural work with rudimentary tools in harsh conditions, according to a 2011 Amnesty International report.

And as many as two million North Koreans have starved to death and one-third of North Korean children are chronically malnourished. According to the rationale given to attack the Assad regime by the Trump administration, we should be bombing North Korea on an almost daily basis.

In truth, there's almost zero legitimate rationale for the Trump administration to have attacked Syria, but it was done anyway. And the question that should be asked is, "Why?"



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