

President Trump: 'No Child of God Should Ever Suffer Such Horror'

At approximately 8:40 p.m. EDT Thursday night, and at the direction of President Donald Trump, two U.S. Navy destroyers launched nearly 60 cruise missiles at the Syrian Air Force base from which it is believed to have launched its chemical weapons attack against the people of the Idlib province.

According to the Pentagon, the strike targeted Shayrat Airfield in the Homs province, and was conducted using 59 Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles launched from the destroyers . Porter and . Ross stationed in the Mediterranean Sea. Targets included "aircraft, hardened aircraft shelters, oil and logistical storage, ammunition supply bunkers, air defense systems and radars."

"As always, the U.S. took extraordinary measures to avoid civilian casualties and to comply with the Law of Armed Conflict," Department of Defense spokesman Navy Capt. Jeff Davis said. "Every precaution was taken to execute this strike with minimal risk to personnel at the airfield.

"The strike was a proportional response to [Syrian President Bashar al-Assad]'s heinous act. Shayrat Airfield was used to store chemical weapons and Syrian air forces. The U.S. intelligence community assesses that aircraft from Shayrat conducted the chemical weapons attack on April 4. The strike was intended to deter the regime from using chemical weapons again."

The strike also had the potential of inflicting casualties upon Russian forces also stationed at the base. Using the "deconfliction line" established following earlier "close calls" during U.S. operations directed at ISIS in Syria, the

Russians were notified in advance of the incoming attack.

Davis said the cruise missiles were targeted in such a way as to minimize the risk to personnel located at the base. Initial indications, he added, were that the strike "severely damaged or destroyed" Syrian aircraft and support infrastructure and equipment.

The Syrian government is claiming that six of its military personnel were killed in the attack. Russia objected to the attack, calling it an "aggression," and in response cut the deconfliction line and suspended coordination of ongoing airstrikes against ISIS. Russian President Vladimir Putin is scheduled to hold a meeting with his military advisers later Friday to discuss a response.

The president was having dinner with his Chinese counterpart as the strikes were underway. About an hour after they occurred, he emerged from his meeting with Xi Jinping to issue a brief statement to the press pool on hand at Mar-a-Lago.

"My fellow Americans, on Tuesday Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad launched a horrible chemical weapons attack on innocent civilians using a deadly nerve agent," he said. "Assad choked out the lives of helpless men women and children. It was a slow and brutal death for so many, even beautiful babies were cruelly murdered in this very barbaric attack.

"No child of God should ever suffer such horror."

The president said he ordered the targeted military strike on the airfield from which the chemical attack was launched because of the "vital national security interest" of the United States to prevent and deter the spread and use of chemical weapons. U.S. military units are also stationed in Syria, working in coordination with rebel groups, and could have found themselves targeted by those deadly weapons.

"There can be no dispute that Syria used banned chemical

weapons, violated its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and ignored the urging of the U.N. Security Council,” he added. “Years of previous attempts at changing Assad’s behavior have all failed and failed very dramatically. As a result, the refugee crisis continues to deepen and the region continues to destabilize, threatening the United States and its allies.”

The president called for “all civilized nations” to join the U.S. in ending the Syrian civil war, and rooting out the terrorists who have taken refuge there. He also made a very public request for the Lord’s intervention.

“We ask for God’s wisdom as we face the challenge of our very troubled world,” he said. “We pray for the lives of the wounded and for the souls of those who have passed, and we hope that as long as America stands for justice, then peace and harmony will in the end prevail. Good night and God bless America and the entire world.”

You can watch his entire speech in the video above. The videos below show the launches of missiles from the . Porter and . Ross, respectively.

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