

Should We Take Out Assad?

Secretary of State Tillerson says that Bashar Assad is guilty of using chemical weapons against his own people. Former senator Ron Paul says there's no way Assad would do this at this point in time. A report on Infowars claims that Syrian rebels are responsible for the attack. President Trump blames Obama's inaction for what happened in Syria. Senator McCain rips Trump.

Do we really know what's going on in Syria? And even if we did, should we try to remove Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad?

According to Rex Tillerson, "There is no doubt in our mind and the information we have supports that Syria, the Syrian regime under the leadership of Bashar al-Assad are responsible for this attack, and I think further it's very important that the Russian government consider carefully their continued support for the Assad regime."

According to Ron Paul, "[I]t doesn't make any sense for Assad under these conditions to all of a sudden use poison gases," he continued. "I think there is a zero chance he would have done, you know, this deliberately."

According to Infowars, "the White Helmets, a al-Qaeda affiliated group funded by George Soros and the British government, reportedly staged the sarin attack on civilians in the Syrian city of Khan Shaykhun to lay blame on the Syrian government."

Who's right?

Obviously, the Trump administration has far more intel than any of us, and America has already launched its first attack on an airfield in Syria.

But our previous missteps in the Middle East call for caution.

We should not act unilaterally until we have a long-term plan.

Think back to Iraq.

We may have had the best intentions in removing Saddam Hussein from power, and he was certainly guilty of horrific crimes. But his removal created a vacuum of power in the region, contributing to the rise of ISIS and the terrible persecution of Christians (and others). What happens if we take out Assad?

Right-wing commentator Paul Joseph Watson expressed his concerns in one tweet: "Regime change in Syria = More dead children More terrorism More refugees ISIS taking the entire country Possible war with Russia. Disaster

The problem is that the sarin attack is so ghastly that it feels criminal not to act.

Who can forget the images of the gassed children? Who can forget the picture of the father holding his dead baby twins?

If war is hell, the war in Syria has been a special kind of hell, a literal inferno of suffering. Yet this latest attack has crossed yet another line.

But for that very reason, we must cautiously and carefully, especially now that we have struck our first retaliatory blow.

Hundreds of thousands of lives have already been lost. Unspeakable atrocities have already been committed. People have been blown to bits, ripped apart, maimed, tortured and more.

Children have lost their parents and parents have lost their children. Whole families have been destroyed in a single day. The peace-loving have been butchered side by side with the terrorists, and really bad guys are present on all sides of the battle.

In short, while the sarin attack crossed a definite line,

other lines have been crossed time and again (do you remember President Obama's red line?). And so, we must act, but we must act prudently. The most recent atrocity, as appalling as it is, cannot force our hand.

What then do we do?

First, if we are not 100 percent sure that the Assad regime is responsible for the chemical attack, we must continue gathering information, even after our first strikes. The lasting controversy over WMDs in Iraq serves as a cautionary warning.

Second, we must think through the long-term regional implications of whatever actions we take, lest our actions lead to even greater suffering and instability.

Third, we must do what we can to support the best players in this bloody drama (if such players exist) while doing our best to protect and aid the innocent, like Syrian Christians who have been caught in the crossfire.

Fourth, we must pray for God's kingdom to come to Syria, in the words of the Lord's prayer. Only divine intervention can bring real healing to that ravaged nation. {eoa}