

1. What would the regime win?

Nothing.

2. What would the regime lose?

- **Humiliates its backers, especially Russia and China.**

Example: what is happening in the Security Council:

- Secretary of State Tillerson "Russia and Iran also bear great moral responsibility for these deaths."¹
- He said Russia, a close ally of President Assad, has a choice of sticking with "the toxic Assad regime that poisons its own people"²
- China, which has vetoed six resolutions on Syria since the civil war began, abstained from Wednesday's U.N.
- Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley showing pictures of dead children.

- **It is the ONLY thing Assad is not allowed to do in Syria; it is the only thing the US has promised to punish him if he does it in Syria:**

- President Obama said such attacks would create a context for U.S. military intervention.³
- The only time Assad was scared was when Obama moved the battleships after 2013 chemical attack. Not even one statement came out from the regime side after being threatened by the US, and the regime agreed to remove the weapons in a surprising period of time.
- Days before the attack in 2017, US officials were saying that the overthrow of Assad is not a priority. This is the first time such statements have been said since the beginning of the civil war.⁴
- Assad stated that he was optimistic with Trump's administration. The regime and Russia shifted from attacking rebels to attacking IS (north east Aleppo and east Palmyra).
- The trust and optimism between the regime and the US reached a level that they collaborated on the ground. During the Turkish offensive in northern Syria, the US gave the town of Menbij to the regime forces from Kurdish forces in order to use the regime forces as a buffer zone to save the Kurds.⁵ US forces even patrolled the area to keep both parties safe and to stop any time of aggression (because no one dares to fire at US forces).⁶

3. What is beneficial for the Trump administration if he conducts the attacks?

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/tillerson-says-russia-iran-bear-great-moral-responsibility-for-deaths-in-syria-from-chemical-weapons-attack/2017/04/04/659da41a-196e-11e7-8598-9a99da559f9e_story.html

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/04/world/middleeast/syria-gas-attack.html>

³ <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/20/world/meast/syria-unrest/>

⁴ <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-03-30/us-un-ambassador-says-washingtons-focus-no-longer-on-removing-assad-in-syria>

⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39140880>

⁶ <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/03/07/us-troops-patrol-syrian-town-peacekeeping-effort.html>

- Showing that he doesn't have red lines drawn in the sand.
 - Spicer: "President Obama said in 2012 that he would establish a red line against the use of chemical weapons and then did nothing."
- Showing that he is fixing the mistakes of the previous administration:
 - "These heinous actions by the Bashar al-Assad regime are a consequence of the past administration's weakness and irresolution," Spicer said.

4. Why wouldn't Assad use chemical weapons from a military point of view?

- With Russia's support Assad was given a large arsenal of deadly and horrific weapons, such that are very similar to napalm but deadlier.
 - cluster bombs⁷, incendiary bombs,⁸ TOS-1⁹. (Please see the links)
- The period of the chemical attack the regime was trying to stop a massive attack by the rebels in the neighboring city, Hama. The regime used all of the above mentioned weapons in that battlefield in order to slow down the rebels.¹⁰
- The location of the attack is very far from any battlefield, thus using chemical weapons will not lead to any positive military result.
- This town and several other towns and villages are considered to have supply lines for the rebels in their operation in northern Hama. So, the weapon of choice is high explosive bombs to lead the most amount of damage to the rebel's equipment.
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5. Will sarin gas be activated by bombs?

Sarin nerve agent exploded near a U.S. military convoy "The Iraqi Survey Group confirmed today that a 155-millimeter artillery round containing sarin nerve agent had been found," said Kimmitt, the chief military spokesman in Iraq. "The round had been rigged as an IED [improvised explosive device] which was discovered by a U.S. force convoy."¹¹ This means that sarin gas can be activated after an explosion. This example is very close to my theory; an idle chemical weapon (artillery round) is activated after an explosion (IED).

6. Is the attack legal?

Article 51 Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQpxNA-uku4>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C9f8Ff8M6E>

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeWP4AcWILU>

¹⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hama-idUSKBN16S2DC>

¹¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33082-2004May17.html>

Basically it says that you can't militarily intervene without UN Security Council authorization UNLESS it's in self defense

7. Will it do anything on the ground?

- It led to ISIS taking control of the oil fields eastern Homs because of lack of aerial support.
- The Syrian Network for Human Rights counted 1134 civilians deaths. So no change on the actual death toll.¹²
- The Iranians were happy with the attack because it drove Assad back to their arms, because they want military solution not a political one.

8. Did they succeed?

No, only 9 hours after the attack, the airfield was in use again.

The US claimed that 20% of the regime's airpower was destroyed and U.S. Navy Admiral Michelle Howard said "The intention was to take out the airfield and to remove the means of the delivery of chemical weapons. I feel that was accomplished,"

The attack did not do much harm because the regime cleared the base before the attack.¹³ The exact number of destroyed planes varies from 6¹⁴ to 20¹⁵. The exact number is probably in between, according to my sources, at least 2 SU-22s and 6 SU-23s were destroyed in the attack.

The reason for the low effectiveness is because the US warned the Russians who warned the regime and both of them cleared the base, not because of what the Russians are saying, "inaccurate weapons."¹⁶

Another proof of the low effectiveness of the attack is the low number of casualties, 6 soldiers died. If the airfield wasn't evacuated, hundreds would have died.

9. Does ISIS and Nusra possess chemical weapons?

Yes, Nusra Front seized control of regiment 111 which contains Sarin, chlorine and other nerve agents.¹⁷ ISIS bombed the Kurds with chlorine gas in 2016.¹⁸ Other Jihadist groups were accused of using it against the regime back in 2013.¹⁹

¹² <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/04/02/37639/>

¹³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-planes-idUSKBN1790MO?il=0>

¹⁴ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-air-strikes-us-donald-trump-assad-capability-not-affected-shayrat-airbase-putin-russia-latest-a7674366.html>

¹⁵ <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/11/politics/syria-mattis-trump-strike-damage/>

¹⁶ <http://time.com/4730306/donald-trump-vladimir-putin-russia-missile-attack-bashar-assad/>

¹⁷ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/08/17/how-the-islamic-state-seized-a-chemical-weapons-stockpile/>

¹⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/18/world/middleeast/islamic-state-isis-chemical-weapons-iraq-syria.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/9950036/Syria-chemical-weapons-finger-pointed-at-jihadists.html>

Benefits of the attack to the administration:

