

Kremlin Slams 'Illegal' U.S. Attack on Syria

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President Donald Trump prepares to make a statement after the U.S. strike on Syria. **Alex Brandon / AP**

The Kremlin has condemned a U.S. missile strike on a government-held airbase in Syria as a "violation of international law."

Presidential Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov slammed the attack as an "act of aggression against a sovereign nation," designed to draw public attention away from civilian deaths in Iraq.

"Washington's move substantially damages Russian-U.S. relations, which are already in a deplorable state," Peskov told reporters on Friday.

"Most importantly, [Russian President Vladimir] Putin believes that this step does not bring us closer to the ultimate goal in the fight against international terrorism. On the contrary, it creates serious obstacles to efforts to forge an international coalition to fight against it

and effectively counter this global evil," Peskov said.

[Russia's Foreign Ministry also announced](#) that they had suspended the memorandum signed by Russia and the United States to ensure the safety of each country's aircraft during Syrian operations.

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U.S. warships launched 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at a Syria's Al Shayrat airbase on Thursday night.

President Donald Trump ordered the strike after a chemical weapons attack killed more than 70 civilians in the Syrian province of Idlib on Wednesday.

The United States, Britain and the EU have all blamed the attack on Syrian government forces, led by President Bashar Assad and backed by the Kremlin.

Moscow has denied that the chemical was dropped from Syrian or Russian planes, instead claiming that a Syrian airstrike had hit a "terrorist warehouse" containing an arsenal of "toxic substances."

U.S. President Donald Trump [described the attack](#) as an "affront to humanity," and that it had "changed his mind" regarding Syrian President Assad.

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, was even more scathing, accusing Russia of covering for Assad's use of chemical weapons.

"Time and time again, Russia uses the same false narrative to deflect attention from their allies in Damascus," Haley said. "Time and time again, without any factual basis, Russia attempts to place blame on others."

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— Nikki Haley (@nikkihaley) [April 5, 2017](#)

Top Russian officials are already calling for a meeting of the UN Security Council following the strike, [Russian news agency RIA Novost reported](#).

Viktor Ozerov, head of the Defense and Security on Russia's Federation Council, told the outlet that the meeting would address the United States' "act of aggression" toward a UN member state.

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