

Extrajudicial Executions Portrayed as “An Instrument of Peace”. Trump Wanted to “Take Out” Syria’s President Assad...

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

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President Donald Trump wants to take out president Bashar Al Assad. Controversy over his statements.

“I would’ve rather taken him out. I had him all set”... Mattis didn’t want to do it”

Déjà Vu: The history of extrajudicial assassinations

Political assassinations and “extra-judicial executions” have been on the drawing board of US intelligence for more than half a century.



In the 1970s, the Senate Select Committee led by Sen. Frank Church “to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Agencies” (Church Committee) confirmed that the CIA had been entrusted with the assassination of foreign heads of state and heads of government. These included president Fidel Castro Ruz (several failed attempts), Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba (Republic of the Congo) and Chilean President Salvador Allende. ([See Church Committee Archive](#)).

The list is long...

[The Church Committee investigated CIA plots to assassinate foreign leaders.](#)

The evidence establishes that the United States was implicated in several assassination plots. The Committee believes that, short of war, assassination is incompatible with American principles, international order, and morality. It should be rejected ‘as a tool of foreign policy.

Our inquiry also reveals serious problems with respect to United States involvement in

coups directed against foreign governments. Some of these problems are addressed here on the basis of our investigation to date ; others we raise as questions to be answered after our investigation into covert action has been completed. ...

The Secret Eisenhower-Macmillan 1957 Plan to Assassinate the Syrian President

With regard to Syria, a detailed Anglo-American plot to assassinate Syria's president was formulated in 1957. The stated objective of this Plan, entrusted to Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) [today's MI6] and the CIA, consisted in assassinating the Syrian president together with key political and military figures. "Mr Macmillan and President Eisenhower were left in no doubt about the need to assassinate the top men in Damascus."

"In order to facilitate the action of liberative forces, reduce the capabilities of the Syrian regime to organise and direct its military actions, to hold losses and destruction to a minimum, and to bring about desired results in the shortest possible time, a special effort should be made to eliminate certain key individuals. Their removal should be accomplished early in the course of the uprising and intervention and in the light of circumstances existing at the time." (The Guardian, 27 September 2003)

The stated pretext of the Macmillan-Eisenhower plan was that Syria was "spreading terrorism" and "preventing the West's access to Middle East oil" (*sounds familiar*).

The secret 1957 Plan called for the funding of a so-called "Free Syria Committee" (*sounds familiar*). It also involved "the arming of "political factions with paramilitary or other actionist capabilities" within Syria. Under the plan, the CIA together with Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) "would instigate internal uprisings".

"Internal disturbances" in Syria would be triggered through covert operations. The "CIA is prepared, and SIS [MI6] will attempt, to mount minor sabotage and coup de main incidents [sic] within Syria, working through contacts with individuals."

An all out invasion plan had also been envisaged. What was lacking from the 1957 plan, formulated at the height of the Cold War, was the "humanitarian" "Responsibility to Protect" R2P envelope. (see Felicity Arbuthnot [SYRIA: CIA-MI6 Intel Ops and Sabotage](#)).

Moreover, in contrast to today's "Syrian Opposition" integrated by US-NATO supported Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists, the 1957 Anglo-American plan did not contemplate the recruitment of foreign mercenaries to wage their war. The 1957 Eisenhower Macmillan Plan was not carried out due to lack of support by neighbouring Arab countries:

"The plan was never used, chiefly because Syria's Arab neighbours could not be persuaded to take action and an attack from Turkey alone was thought to be unacceptable. (Ben Fenton, The Guardian, 27 September 2003, emphasis added)

Obama's War Syria (2011-)

Visibly the "Rules have Changed"

Extrajudicial assassinations of political opponents are no longer limited to the realm of covert intelligence operations. They are openly heralded by US politicians (war hawks) as a means to achieving peace: a “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P).

An invasion of Syria was contemplated in the immediate wake of the 2003 Iraq invasion by US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. It was put on hold.

The war on Syria, portrayed as a civil war, was launched under the Obama administration. Extrajudicial assassination of the Syrian head of State was openly contemplated as a means to reaching a “peaceful solution”, i.e. “preventing” president Bashar Al Assad from “slaughtering his own people”.

Realities are turned upside down. The architects of war are portrayed as “peace-makers”. Bashar Al Assad is an elected head of state. He has the full support of the Syrian people in leading the battle against Al Qaeda affiliated mercenaries supported and funded by US-NATO.



Several of America’s staunchest allies were in favor of the assassination option. According to Australia’s foreign minister Bob Carr (October 2012) “the assassination [of president Al Assad] is a pre-condition of movement towards peace in Syria.” [The Australian](#), October 9, 2012)

France’s former president Nicolas Sarkozy “reportedly spent his last days in office trying to convince Obama to be part of the attack ... on Assad’s palace, family and members of the Syrian government.” (See [The Deccan Herald](#), May 12, 2012).

President Obama, according to reports,

“was reluctant to be part of this ‘complex’ mission and despite repeated requests from former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, the plan to involve US forces never took off.” (See [The Deccan Herald](#), May 12, 2012)

Flash Forward to the Trump Administration

[A report in The Hill \(September 15, 2020\)](#) suggests that Donald Trump had envisaged an extrajudicial assassination of Syrian President Bashar Assad in 2017. Former Defense Secretary James Mattis was allegedly opposed to this undertaking:

The president’s disclosure that an assassination operation was discussed came as part of a lengthy diatribe against Mattis, but it confirmed a piece of reporting from 2018 that Trump disputed at the time.

“I would’ve rather taken him out. I had him all set. Mattis didn’t want to do it. Mattis was a highly overrated general,” Trump said on “Fox & Friends.”

The president added that he did not regret the decision not to target Assad, saying he “could’ve lived either way.” The Syrian leader has overseen the deaths of scores of civilians amid a years-long civil war that has ravaged the country.

Journalist [Bob Woodward](#) reported in his 2018 book, “Fear,” that Trump urged Mattis that the U.S. should “f— kill” Assad following an April 2017 chemical attack on civilians in Syria.

Mattis reportedly went along with the president’s demands during the phone call, but immediately told aides after hanging up that they would take a “much more measured” approach.

Trump was asked about the reporting at the time and said the assassination of Assad was “never even discussed.”

“No, that was never even contemplated, nor would it be contemplated and it should not have been written about in the book,” Trump [said](#) in September 2018. Brett Samuels, [The Hill](#), September 15, 2020)

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