

# Syria: Is the West Contemplating the Assassination of President Bashar Al Assad?

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)  
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**By Michel Chossudovsky**

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*A policy of political assassination and “extra-judicial execution” has 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 (failed attempts), Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba (Republic of the Congo) and Chilean President Salvador Allende. ([See Church Committee Archive](#)).*

*More recently, the School of Advanced Military Studies (US Army Command and General Staff College) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in a [2006 monograph](#) acknowledged that “political assassinations” are “illegal” as opposed to what they define as “targeted killing”. The later is identified as “the intentional slaying of a specific individual or group of individuals undertaken with explicit governmental approval”. Play of words: Targeted killing is categorized as a form of “extra-judicial execution” rather than a criminal act of outright “assassination”:*

*Given these definitions it is important to note that other forms of extra-judicial execution, targeted killing, or elimination are not synonymous with assassination. **Assassination, whether in peacetime or wartime, constitutes an illegal killing, while other modes of killing may or may not be legal according to international law or the laws of armed conflict.** For the purpose of this monograph, other modes of state sponsored killing that do not constitute assassination will be referred to as ‘targeted killings.’ ( [US Army Command and General Staff College, 2006 monograph](#))*

## **Plans to Assassinate the Syrian Head of State Bashar Al Assad**

According to (unconfirmed) reports, a Franco-Saudi plan to assassinate president Bashar Al Assad had been initiated by France’s former president Nicolas Sarkozy. The outgoing French president “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)

Russia Today quoted the Debka news agency in Israel saying the American President was not ready to ‘loan’ his military’s firepower to help the Franco-Saudi mission that relied on air strikes and intense bombardment of Assad’s stronghold in Syria. (Ibid)

It is worth noting that in mid-July, the Syrian government was targeted. In a carefully planned bomb attack, Defense Minister Daoud Rajha, Assef Shawkat (Deputy Minister of Defense) and General Hassan Turkmani (Assistant Vice President) were killed. There is no evidence that France was behind this operation.

### **Political assassination: A Diplomatic Talking Point**

While political assassination is part of an ongoing intelligence agenda, the assassination option of the Syrian president is now in the public domain, a “talking point” behind diplomatic closed doors.

In a recent statement, Australia’s foreign minister Bob Carr insinuated in no uncertain terms that “a major military defection and **an assassination [of president Al Assad] seem to be pre-conditions of movement towards peace in Syria.**” [The Australian](#), October 9, 2012)

“I think we’d know the conflict has evened up if there is a major defection from the Assad government, especially a defection that takes part of its armed forces with it,” he said.

“This sounds brutal and callous, perhaps an assassination combined with a major defection, taking a large part of its military, is what is required to get one; a ceasefire and two; political negotiations. ( [Ibid](#))

**Foreign Minister Bob Carr, who is privy to US-NATO foreign policy options** clarified however that he had “no intelligence data – none has flowed across my desk – that suggests this is about to happen but **it would seem to be a pre-condition of movement towards [peace and a ceasefire]**” ( [Ibid](#),\_ October 9, 2012)

Assassination is heralded as an instrument of “peace-making”, according to Australia’s foreign minister, “a precondition towards peace”.

What is implied from NATO’s standpoint is that “peace and democracy” in Syria, require the “extra-judicial execution” (aka. assassination) of the Syrian head of State.

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### **For a historical review of US assassination policies see:**

**Prof. Gordon L. Bowen** [“Targeted Killings:” U.S. Policy toward use of covert operations involving assassination, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton VA, July 2012](#)

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