

Syria anticipating air strike from the US after imminent reports of a chemical weapons attack; Russia stands by its long-time ally.



Image: Reuters

An anticipated attack on Syria by the United States has prompted Russia into deploying its largest fleet of warships in the Mediterranean. This naval force consists of a total of 10 warships along with two submarines. A couple more are on their way.

Mezzeh Air Base in Syria had all its troops ready for a possible attack on Damascus, according to Sputnik News' source. Air Defence forces in the country were prepared for an air strike initiated by the United States. Al-Masdar News reported, "While the exact reason for this move wasn't revealed, it is believed to be due to the potential threat of a US strike on the capital or its surrounding area." In April of this year, the US, the United Kingdom and France co-ordinated a huge airstrike against Syria. This step was taken after reports surfaced that chemical weapons had been used in Douma. OPCW experts also found traces of organic substances containing chlorine which had allegedly been used in this attack. The French President Emmanuel Macron also declared to French Ambassadors that their nation was once again ready to launch new attacks via air strikes should foul play of chemical substances be suspected. The present-day airstrike has been triggered following whispers that there could be another chemical attack in Idlib. Idlib is the last province in Syria that is rebel-held, adding to the woes of a nation that has already witnessed almost three years of civil war and conflict.

Russia's support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is shocking considering Assad is responsible for the death of nearly 100,000 Syrians as well as for giving birth to millions of refugees. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin has a long-standing friendship with the Syrian tyrant, displaying the show of friendship by shipping his gigantic naval force to the Mediterranean Sea. Putin had branded the April air strike as a "destructive influence on the entire system of international relations" as well as an "act of aggression" that will aggravate humanitarian catastrophe. The US had also warned that it would not hesitate to use a strong action if chemical weapons were used in Idlib by Assad. John Bolton, US President Donald Trump's National Security Adviser, recognized that the Syrian Government needed to resume their conflict with the rebels in Idlib. He stated in a Jerusalem held a press conference that, "We are obviously concerned about the possibility that Assad may use chemical weapons again. Just so there's no confusion here, if the Syrian regime uses chemical weapons we will respond very strongly and they really ought to think

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about this a long time.” Iran is supporting Assad in the Syrian conflict along with Putin and Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shiite militant group. However, Bolton has insisted that the recent sanctions on Iran were not going to be re-imposed to oust Iranian leadership.

The Russian Defence Ministry had announced earlier that Idlib rebels were preparing to stage a false attack against civilians to lure the US and its allies into attacking Syria. It also mentioned that these countries were building up a group of cruise missile carriers in the Middle East region in preparation for a possible strike.

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