

# Statement by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis on the U.S. Military Response to the Syrian Government's Use of Chemical Weapons

---

[defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/1146758/statement-by-secretary-of-defense-jim-mattis-on-the-us-military-response-to-the](https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/1146758/statement-by-secretary-of-defense-jim-mattis-on-the-us-military-response-to-the)

Immediate Release

April 10, 2017

The U.S. military strike against Shayrat airfield on April 6 was a measured response to the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons.

The president directed this action to deter future use of chemical weapons and to show the United States will not passively stand by while Assad murders innocent people with chemical weapons, which are prohibited by international law and which were declared destroyed.

The assessment of the Department of Defense is that the strike resulted in the damage or destruction of fuel and ammunition sites, air defense capabilities, and 20 percent of Syria's operational aircraft. The Syrian government has lost the ability to refuel or rearm aircraft at Shayrat airfield and at this point, use of the runway is of idle military interest.

The Syrian government would be ill-advised ever again to use chemical weapons.