US Missile Strike on Syria - Part II

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Why in news?

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US launched a missile strike against Syria under the pretext of suspected chemical weapons attack on Khan Sheikhun by President Bashar Al-Assad's regime.

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What are the implications?

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- The attack has earned the U.S. President praise even from his strongest critics.
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- But it did not achieve anything beyond the domestic political dividends.
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- It is seen as a move against accusations of him being an aide of Russia.
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- The move is to pacify the domestic demand for a "limited action" in Syria, which they said wouldn't necessarily escalate military tensions between the U.S. and Russia.
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- It is also calculated to win back its anti-Assad allies in West Asia who were disappointed with President Barack Obama's Iran agreement.
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- The high moral ground that the administration is taking over the civilian deaths also appears to be hollow. Because, weeks before the Syria attack, hundreds of civilians were killed in Mosul and Raqqa by U.S. jets.
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- Beyond the emotional appeal, there has to be a strategic calculus behind decisions to use force. The attack achieved nothing in strategic terms.
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What are the problems of limited attack?

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- The real risk is that once America enters a battlefield it doesn’t get out of it easily. e.g Vietnam.
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- Limited attacks with tactical actions leave the balance of power on the ground intact while altering the overall political atmosphere drastically.
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- The same holds true for Syria. The U.S. strike won’t have any drastic impact on the civil war. But the strike has cemented the Moscow-Damascus alliance further.
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- It raises the bar. After this attack, The President will come under increased pressure, both from the interventionist lobby at home and allies in West Asia, to act again.
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- It also has thrown the possibility of any future Russian-U.S. cooperation in finding a political solution to the Syrian war into jeopardy.
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- It has pushed the President from non-interventionist stance into a dilemma of whether to use diplomatic means or go for a full-blown attack.
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- If he chooses the former, it goes against the moral argument of and would disappoint allies. If he picks the latter, it would result in a much more disastrous war with the U.S. and Russia against each other.
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Source: The Hindu

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