

Assassinating: Kicking the Hornet's Nest
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Since President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the assassination of Japan's Admiral Yamamoto during World War II, Presidents have had that rarely used option in their tool box. An American pilot spotted the admiral in a nearby aircraft and shot it down.

Yamamoto was a foreign student in the US before the war, and when years later he was part of the Japanese leadership deciding to attack the US, he warned against it. "Do not awaken the sleeping bear," he warned. The fascists leading the party did not agree. Yamamoto was assigned to come up with the plan, which he loyally did. The daring attack on Honolulu was designed to destroy our pacific fleet, which they hoped would push us into coming to terms with Japan and not entering the war.

Of course, the opposite was the result. We entered the war against Japan, Germany, and Italy on December 8, and our entry determined the outcome of World War II. Japan paid a terrible price, and in eliminating Admiral Yamamoto, we killed a person who might have shortened the war with Japan, maybe before two atomic bombs were detonated on them.

Assassination is a blunt tool. If we can assassinate, so can our enemy. Presidents need to know what might happen next after removing a person they see as "cutting off the head of the snake." It can instead be "kicking the hornet's nest." In any case, an assassination order must be the result of informed discussion, intelligence, historians, the whole range of advisors that help shape a president's foreign policy.

President Obama decided that decapitating Al Qaida and carrying out America's revenge against the 9-11 attack on us ordered by Osama Bin Laden was warranted. He knew that going after him while he was hiding in Pakistan (in plain sight of the Pakistani military) was worth the fuss that Pakistan would make. Pakistan has been (and still is) one of our least trustworthy of allies.

Susan Rice's book: Tough Love, details the job of a National Security Advisor to President Obama. She describes the daily work of coordinating input of strong-minded, competent military and intelligence advisors, weighting options, considering consequences of actions taken, and helping the President to make the most difficult and dangerous decisions.

Describing the many phone calls between Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama, we learn how carefully such calls are prepared with talking points, analysis of Putin's goals, and careful documenting of the call and its results. This process is the result of accumulated experience from World War II on, and how much Presidential decisions depend upon such support.

We now have a president who clearly wants no such advice. He took office completely ignorant of the rigors of the job, the discipline required to carry out national objectives, and although his first cabinet included several former generals who tried to guide him, he resisted and fired them both. He trusts his gut more than advisor's brains.

He is now the fourth President to order an assassination in a sovereign state. The first (Roosevelt) was done during a declared war with an enemy. The second (Kennedy) was against a Vietnamese president. Third (Obama) was a stateless terrorist, given sanctuary in a supposed ally's country. Trump's was against an official, a general of Iran, albeit one whose function was more terrorist than soldier. He was murdered while visiting Iraq, a supposed client state of ours.

This assassination was not prepared for in the usual way: guided by intelligence advisors, area specialists, and consultation with the committee of Congress and Senate leadership. It already has consequences.

Before the assassination, Iraqis were in the streets demonstrating against Iran's interference in their country. Iranians were demonstrating in 100 cities against the Islamic government, a government that has long outlived its popularity. Now all demonstrations are against the United States, and Iraq is trying to kick out our military.

Our position of creating stability in the world is now defunct. There is only one beneficiary of Trump's assassination caper: Vladimir Putin. His policy is sowing chaos in the world and replacing us in the Middle East.

683 words

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