Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.) On U.S. Airstrikes Against Syrian Government Forces

In a world of vicious dictators, Syria's Bashar Assad tops the list as a dictator who has killed hundreds of thousands of his own citizens to protect his own power and wealth. His regime's use of chemical weapons against the men, women and children of his country, in violation of all international conventions and moral standards, makes him a war criminal.

As the most powerful nation on earth, the United States must work with the international community to bring peace and stability to Syria, where over 400,000 people have been killed and over 6 million displaced. The horror of Syria's civil war is almost unimaginable.

If there's anything we should've learned from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in which the lives of thousands of brave American men and women and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Afghan civilians have been lost and trillions of dollars spent, it's that it's easier to get into a war than get out of one. I'm deeply concerned that these strikes could lead to the United States once again being dragged back into the quagmire of long-term military engagement in the Middle East. If the last 15 years have shown anything, it's that such engagements are disastrous for American security, for the American economy and for the American people.

The Trump administration must explain to the American people exactly what this military escalation in Syria is intended to achieve, and how it fits into the broader goal of a political solution, which is the only way Syria's devastating civil war ends. Congress has a responsibility to weigh in on these issues. As the Constitution requires, the president must come to Congress to authorize any further use of force against the Assad regime.

Further, the US must work with all parties to reinforce longstanding international norms against the use of chemical weapons, to hold Russia and Syria to the 2013 deal to destroy these weapons and to see that violators are made accountable.