

Public Law 108–175
108th Congress

An Act

Dec. 12, 2003
[H.R. 1828]

To halt Syrian support for terrorism, end its occupation of Lebanon, and stop its development of weapons of mass destruction, and by so doing hold Syria accountable for the serious international security problems it has caused in the Middle East, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Syria
Accountability
and Lebanese
Sovereignty
Restoration Act
of 2003.
22 USC 2151
note.
22 USC 2151
note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) On June 24, 2002, President Bush stated “Syria must choose the right side in the war on terror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist organizations”.

(2) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (September 28, 2001) mandates that all states “refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts”, take “the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts”, and “deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts”.

(3) The Government of Syria is currently prohibited by United States law from receiving United States assistance because it has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism, as determined by the Secretary of State for purposes of section 6(j)(1) of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2405(j)(1)) and other relevant provisions of law.

(4) Although the Department of State lists Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism and reports that Syria provides “safe haven and support to several terrorist groups”, fewer United States sanctions apply with respect to Syria than with respect to any other country that is listed as a state sponsor of terrorism.

(5) Terrorist groups, including Hizballah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, maintain offices, training camps, and other facilities on Syrian territory, and operate in areas of Lebanon occupied by the Syrian armed forces and receive supplies from Iran through Syria.

(6) United Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (September 17, 1982) calls for “strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon through the Lebanese Army throughout Lebanon”.

(7) Approximately 20,000 Syrian troops and security personnel occupy much of the sovereign territory of Lebanon exerting undue influence upon its government and undermining its political independence.

(8) Since 1990 the Senate and House of Representatives have passed seven bills and resolutions which call for the withdrawal of Syrian armed forces from Lebanon.

(9) On March 3, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that it is the objective of the United States to “let Lebanon be ruled by the Lebanese people without the presence of [the Syrian] occupation army”.

(10) Large and increasing numbers of the Lebanese people from across the political spectrum in Lebanon have mounted peaceful and democratic calls for the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from Lebanese soil.

(11) Israel has withdrawn all of its armed forces from Lebanon in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 (March 19, 1978), as certified by the United Nations Secretary General.

(12) Even in the face of this United Nations certification that acknowledged Israel’s full compliance with Security Council Resolution 425, Syrian- and Iranian-supported Hizballah continues to attack Israeli outposts at Shebaa Farms, under the pretense that Shebaa Farms is territory from which Israel was required to withdraw by Security Council Resolution 425, and Syrian- and Iranian-supported Hizballah and other militant organizations continue to attack civilian targets in Israel.

(13) Syria will not allow Lebanon—a sovereign country—to fulfill its obligation in accordance with Security Council Resolution 425 to deploy its troops to southern Lebanon.

(14) As a result, the Israeli-Lebanese border and much of southern Lebanon is under the control of Hizballah, which continues to attack Israeli positions, allows Iranian Revolutionary Guards and other militant groups to operate freely in the area, and maintains thousands of rockets along Israel’s northern border, destabilizing the entire region.

(15) On February 12, 2003, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet stated the following with respect to the Syrian- and Iranian-supported Hizballah: “[A]s an organization with capability and worldwide presence [it] is [al Qaeda’s] equal if not a far more capable organization * * * [T]hey’re a notch above in many respects, in terms of in their relationship with the Iranians and the training they receive, [which] puts them in a state-sponsored category with a potential for lethality that’s quite great.”

(16) In the State of the Union address on January 29, 2002, President Bush declared that the United States will “work closely with our coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction”.

(17) The Government of Syria continues to develop and deploy short- and medium-range ballistic missiles.

(18) According to the December 2001 unclassified Central Intelligence Agency report entitled “Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat through 2015”, “Syria maintains a ballistic missile and rocket force of hundreds of FROG rockets, Scuds, and SS-21 SRBMs [and] Syria has developed [chemical weapons] warheads for its Scuds”.

(19) The Government of Syria is pursuing the development and production of biological and chemical weapons and has a nuclear research and development program that is cause for concern.

(20) According to the Central Intelligence Agency’s “Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions”, released January 7, 2003: “[Syria] already holds a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin but apparently is trying to develop more toxic and persistent nerve agents. Syria remains dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its [chemical weapons] program, including precursor chemicals and key production equipment. It is highly probable that Syria also is developing an offensive [biological weapons] capability.”

(21) On May 6, 2002, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John Bolton, stated: “The United States also knows that Syria has long had a chemical warfare program. It has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin and is engaged in research and development of the more toxic and persistent nerve agent VX. Syria, which has signed but not ratified the [Biological Weapons Convention], is pursuing the development of biological weapons and is able to produce at least small amounts of biological warfare agents.”

(22) According to the Central Intelligence Agency’s “Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions”, released January 7, 2003: “Russia and Syria have approved a draft cooperative program on cooperation on civil nuclear power. In principal, broader access to Russian expertise provides opportunities for Syria to expand its indigenous capabilities, should it decide to pursue nuclear weapons.”

(23) Under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (21 UST 483), which entered force on March 5, 1970, and to which Syria is a party, Syria has undertaken not to acquire or produce nuclear weapons and has accepted full scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency to detect diversions of nuclear materials from peaceful activities to the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

(24) Syria is not a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention or the Biological Weapons Convention, which entered into force on April 29, 1997, and on March 26, 1975, respectively.

(25) Syrian President Bashar Assad promised Secretary of State Powell in February 2001 to end violations of Security Council Resolution 661, which restricted the sale of oil and other commodities by Saddam Hussein’s regime, except to the

extent authorized by other relevant resolutions, but this pledge was never fulfilled.

(26) Syria's illegal imports and transshipments of Iraqi oil during Saddam Hussein's regime earned Syria \$50,000,000 or more per month as Syria continued to sell its own Syrian oil at market prices.

(27) Syria's illegal imports and transshipments of Iraqi oil earned Saddam Hussein's regime \$2,000,000 per day.

(28) On March 28, 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld warned: "[W]e have information that shipments of military supplies have been crossing the border from Syria into Iraq, including night-vision goggles * * * These deliveries pose a direct threat to the lives of coalition forces. We consider such trafficking as hostile acts, and will hold the Syrian government accountable for such shipments."

(29) According to Article 23(1) of the United Nations Charter, members of the United Nations are elected as nonpermanent members of the United Nations Security Council with "due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to other purposes of the Organization".

(30) Despite Article 23(1) of the United Nations Charter, Syria was elected on October 8, 2001, to a 2-year term as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council beginning January 1, 2002, and served as President of the Security Council during June 2002 and August 2003.

(31) On March 31, 2003, the Syrian Foreign Minister, Farouq al-Sharra, made the Syrian regime's intentions clear when he explicitly stated that "Syria's interest is to see the invaders defeated in Iraq".

(32) On April 13, 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld charged that "busloads" of Syrian fighters entered Iraq with "hundreds of thousands of dollars" and leaflets offering rewards for dead American soldiers.

(33) On September 16, 2003, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John Bolton, appeared before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, and underscored Syria's "hostile actions" toward coalition forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Under Secretary Bolton added that: "Syria allowed military equipment to flow into Iraq on the eve of and during the war. Syria permitted volunteers to pass into Iraq to attack and kill our service members during the war, and is still doing so * * * [Syria's] behavior during Operation Iraqi Freedom underscores the importance of taking seriously reports and information on Syria's WMD capabilities."

(34) During his appearance before the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives on September 25, 2003, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, III, Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, stated that out of the 278 third-country nationals who were captured by coalition forces in Iraq, the "single largest group are Syrians".

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note.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Government of Syria should immediately and unconditionally halt support for terrorism, permanently and openly declare its total renunciation of all forms of terrorism, and close all terrorist offices and facilities in Syria, including the offices of Hamas, Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command;

(2) the Government of Syria should—

(A) immediately and unconditionally stop facilitating transit from Syria to Iraq of individuals, military equipment, and all lethal items, except as authorized by the Coalition Provisional Authority or a representative, internationally recognized Iraqi government;

(B) cease its support for “volunteers” and terrorists who are traveling from and through Syria into Iraq to launch attacks; and

(C) undertake concrete, verifiable steps to deter such behavior and control the use of territory under Syrian control;

(3) the Government of Syria should immediately declare its commitment to completely withdraw its armed forces, including military, paramilitary, and security forces, from Lebanon, and set a firm timetable for such withdrawal;

(4) the Government of Lebanon should deploy the Lebanese armed forces to all areas of Lebanon, including South Lebanon, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (September 17, 1982), in order to assert the sovereignty of the Lebanese state over all of its territory, and should evict all terrorist and foreign forces from southern Lebanon, including Hizballah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards;

(5) the Government of Syria should halt the development and deployment of medium- and long-range surface-to-surface missiles and cease the development and production of biological and chemical weapons;

(6) the Governments of Lebanon and Syria should enter into serious unconditional bilateral negotiations with the Government of Israel in order to realize a full and permanent peace;

(7) the United States should continue to provide humanitarian and educational assistance to the people of Lebanon only through appropriate private, nongovernmental organizations and appropriate international organizations, until such time as the Government of Lebanon asserts sovereignty and control over all of its territory and borders and achieves full political independence, as called for in United Nations Security Council Resolution 520; and

(8) as a violator of several key United Nations Security Council resolutions and as a nation that pursues policies which undermine international peace and security, Syria should not have been permitted to join the United Nations Security Council or serve as the Security Council’s President, and should be removed from the Security Council.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.22 USC 2151
note.

It is the policy of the United States that—

(1) Syria should bear responsibility for attacks committed by Hizballah and other terrorist groups with offices, training camps, or other facilities in Syria, or bases in areas of Lebanon occupied by Syria;

(2) the United States will work to deny Syria the ability to support acts of international terrorism and efforts to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction;

(3) the Secretary of State will continue to list Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism until Syria ends its support for terrorism, including its support of Hizballah and other terrorist groups in Lebanon and its hosting of terrorist groups in Damascus, and comes into full compliance with United States law relating to terrorism and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (September 28, 2001);

(4) the full restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity is in the national security interest of the United States;

(5) Syria is in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (September 17, 1982) through its continued occupation of Lebanese territory and its encroachment upon Lebanon's political independence;

(6) Syria's obligation to withdraw from Lebanon is not conditioned upon progress in the Israeli-Syrian or Israeli-Lebanese peace process but derives from Syria's obligation under Security Council Resolution 520;

(7) Syria's acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs threaten the security of the Middle East and the national security interests of the United States;

(8) Syria will be held accountable for any harm to Coalition armed forces or to any United States citizen in Iraq if the government of Syria is found to be responsible due to its facilitation of terrorist activities and its shipments of military supplies to Iraq; and

(9) the United States will not provide any assistance to Syria and will oppose multilateral assistance for Syria until Syria ends all support for terrorism, withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon, and halts the development and deployment of weapons of mass destruction and medium- and long-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles.

SEC. 5. PENALTIES AND AUTHORIZATION.President.
22 USC 2151
note.
Certification.

(a) PENALTIES.—Until the President makes the determination that Syria meets all the requirements described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (d) and certifies such determination to Congress in accordance with such subsection—

(1) the President shall prohibit the export to Syria of any item, including the issuance of a license for the export of any item, on the United States Munitions List or Commerce Control List of dual-use items in the Export Administration Regulations (15 CFR part 730 et seq.); and

(2) the President shall impose two or more of the following sanctions:

(A) Prohibit the export of products of the United States (other than food and medicine) to Syria.

(B) Prohibit United States businesses from investing or operating in Syria.

(C) Restrict Syrian diplomats in Washington, D.C., and at the United Nations in New York City, to travel only within a 25-mile radius of Washington, D.C., or the United Nations headquarters building, respectively.

(D) Prohibit aircraft of any air carrier owned or controlled by Syria to take off from, land in, or overfly the United States.

(E) Reduce United States diplomatic contacts with Syria (other than those contacts required to protect United States interests or carry out the purposes of this Act).

(F) Block transactions in any property in which the Government of Syria has any interest, by any person, or with respect to any property, subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

Reports.

(b) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of subsection (a)(1), (a)(2), or both if the President determines that it is in the national security interest of the United States to do so and submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing the reasons for the determination.

(c) AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA.—If the President—

Certification.

(1) makes the determination that Syria meets the requirements described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (d) and certifies such determination to Congress in accordance with such subsection;

(2) determines that substantial progress has been made both in negotiations aimed at achieving a peace agreement between Israel and Syria and in negotiations aimed at achieving a peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon; and

(3) determines that the Government of Syria is strictly respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon through the Lebanese army throughout Lebanon, as required under paragraph (4) of United Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (1982),

then the President is authorized to provide assistance to Syria under chapter 1 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (relating to development assistance).

(d) CERTIFICATION.—A certification under this subsection is a certification transmitted to the appropriate congressional committees of a determination made by the President that—

(1) the Government of Syria has ceased providing support for international terrorist groups and does not allow terrorist groups, such as Hamas, Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command to maintain facilities in territory under Syrian control;

(2) the Government of Syria ended its occupation of Lebanon described in section 2(7) of this Act;

(3) the Government of Syria has ceased the development and deployment of medium- and long-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles, is not pursuing or engaged in the research, development, acquisition, production, transfer, or deployment of biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons, has provided credible assurances that such behavior will not be undertaken

in the future, and has agreed to allow United Nations and other international observers to verify such actions and assurances; and

(4) the Government of Syria has ceased all support for, and facilitation of, all terrorist activities inside of Iraq, including preventing the use of territory under its control by any means whatsoever to support those engaged in terrorist activities inside of Iraq.

SEC. 6. REPORT.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 12 months thereafter until the conditions described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 5(d) are satisfied, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on—

(1) Syria’s progress toward meeting the conditions described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 5(d);

(2) connections, if any, between individual terrorists and terrorist groups which maintain offices, training camps, or other facilities on Syrian territory, or operate in areas of Lebanon occupied by the Syrian armed forces, and terrorist attacks on the United States or its citizens, installations, or allies; and

(3) how the United States is increasing its efforts against Hizballah and other terrorist organizations supported by Syria.

(b) **FORM.**—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall be in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

22 USC 2151
note.
Deadlines.

SEC. 7. DEFINITION OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

22 USC 2151
note.

Approved December 12, 2003.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 1828:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 108–314 (Comm. on International Relations).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 149 (2003):

Oct. 15, considered and passed House.

Nov. 11, considered and passed Senate, amended.

Nov. 20, House concurred in Senate amendments.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 39 (2003):

Dec. 12, Presidential statement.