

SYRIA JOINT RESOLUTION FOR MARKUP

JOINT RESOLUTION

To authorize the limited and tailored use of the United States Armed Forces against Syria.

Whereas Syria is in material breach of the laws of war by having employed chemical weapons against its civilian population;

Whereas the abuses of the regime of Bashar al-Assad have included the brutal repression and war upon its own civilian population, resulting in more than 100,000 people killed in the past two years, and more than 2 million internally displaced people and Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq, creating an unprecedented regional crisis and instability;

Whereas the Assad regime has the largest chemical weapons programs in the region and has demonstrated its capability and willingness to repeatedly use weapons of mass destruction against its own people, including the August 21, 2013 attack in the suburbs of Damascus in which the Assad regime murdered over 1,000 innocent people, including hundreds of children;

Whereas there is clear and compelling evidence of the direct involvement of Assad regime forces and senior officials in the planning, execution, and after-action attempts to cover-up the August 21 attack, and hide or destroy evidence of such attack;

Whereas the Arab League has declared with regards to the August 21 incident to hold the “Syrian regime responsible for this heinous crime”;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council, in Resolution 1540 (2004) affirmed that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security;

Whereas in the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, Congress found that Syria’s acquisition of weapons of mass destruction threatens the security of the Middle East and the national security interests of the United States;

Whereas the actions and conduct of the Assad regime are in direct contravention of Syria's legal obligations under the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions, and the Geneva Protocol to the Hague Convention on the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, and also violates standards set forth in the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas Syria's use of weapons of mass destruction and its conduct and actions constitute a grave threat to regional stability, world peace, and the national security interests of the United States and its allies and partners;

Whereas the objectives of the United States use of military force in connection with this authorization are to respond to the use, and deter and degrade the potential future use of weapons of mass destruction by the Syrian government;

Whereas the conflict in Syria will only be resolved through a negotiated political settlement, and Congress calls on all parties to the conflict in Syria to participate urgently and constructively in the Geneva process; and

Whereas the President has authority under the Constitution to use force in order to defend the national security interests of the United States:

Now, therefore, be it,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This joint resolution may be cited as the “Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against the Government of Syria to Respond to Use of Chemical Weapons”.

SECTION 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

(a) **AUTHORIZATION**-The President is authorized, subject to subsection (b), to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in a limited and tailored manner against legitimate military targets in Syria, only to: (1) respond to the use of weapons of mass destruction by the Syrian government in the conflict in Syria; (2) deter Syria’s use of such weapons in order to protect the national security interests of the United States and to protect our allies and partners against the use of such weapons; and (3) degrade Syria’s capacity to use such weapons in the future.

(b) **REQUIREMENT FOR DETERMINATION THAT USE OF MILITARY FORCE IS NECESSARY**- Before exercising the authority granted in subsection (a), the President shall make available to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate his determination that—

(1) the United States has used all appropriate diplomatic and other peaceful means to prevent the deployment and use of weapons of mass destruction by Syria;

(2) the Syrian government has conducted one or more significant chemical weapons attacks;

(3) the use of military force is necessary to respond to the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government;

(4) it is in the core national security interest of the United States to use such military force;

(5) the United States has a military plan to achieve the specific goals of responding to the use of weapons of mass destruction by the Syrian government in the conflict in Syria, to deter Syria's use of such weapons in order to protect the national security interests of the United States and to protect our allies and partners against the use of such weapons, and to degrade Syria's capacity to use such weapons in the future; and

(6) the use of military force is consistent with and furthers the goals of the United States strategy toward Syria, including achieving a negotiated political settlement to the conflict.

(c) WAR POWERS RESOLUTION REQUIREMENTS-

(1) **SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION-** Consistent with section 8(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution, 50 U.S.C. § 1541, et seq., the Congress declares that this section is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution, within the limits of the authorization established under this Section.

(2) **APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS-** Nothing in this resolution supersedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution.

SECTION 3. LIMITATION. The authority granted in section 2 does not authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces on the ground in Syria for the purpose of combat operations.

SECTION 4. TERMINATION OF THE AUTHORIZATION FOR THE USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

The authorization in section 2(a) shall terminate 60 days after the date of the enactment of this joint resolution, except that the President may extend, for a single period of 30 days, such authorization if –

(1) the President determines and certifies to Congress, not later than 5 days before the date of termination of the initial authorization, that the extension is necessary to fulfill the purposes of this resolution as defined by Section 2(a) due to extraordinary circumstances and for ongoing and impending military operations against Syria under section 2(a); and

(2) Congress does not enact into law, before the extension of authorization, a joint resolution disapproving the extension of the authorization for the additional 30 day period; provided that any such joint resolution shall be considered under the expedited procedures otherwise provided for concurrent resolutions of disapproval contained in section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546).

SECTION 5. SYRIA STRATEGY.

Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this resolution, the President shall consult with Congress and submit to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives an integrated United States Government strategy for achieving a negotiated political settlement to the conflict in Syria, including a comprehensive review of current and planned U.S. diplomatic, political, economic, and military policy towards Syria, including: (1) the provision of all forms of assistance to the Syrian Supreme Military Council and other Syrian entities opposed to the government of Bashar Al-Assad that have been properly and fully vetted and share common values and interests with the United States; (2) the provision of all forms of assistance to the Syrian political opposition, including the Syrian Opposition Coalition; (3) efforts to isolate extremist and terrorist groups in Syria to prevent their influence on the future transitional and permanent Syrian governments; (4) coordination with allies and partners; and (5) efforts to limit support from the Government of Iran and others for the Syrian regime.

SECTION 6. CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING.

(a) Notification and Provision of Information. Upon his determination to use the authority set forth in section 2 of this Act, the President shall notify Congress, including the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, of the use of such authority and shall keep Congress fully and currently informed of the use of such authority.

(b) Reports. No fewer than 10 days after the initiation of military operations under the authority provided by Section 2, and every 20 days thereafter until the completion of military operations, the President shall submit to the Congress, including the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, a report on the status of such operations, including progress achieved toward the objectives specified in Section 2(a), the financial costs of operations to date, and an assessment of the impact of the operations on the Syrian regime's chemical weapons capabilities and intentions.

SECTION 7. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION. The authority set forth in Section 2 of this resolution shall not constitute an authorization for the use of force or a declaration of war except to the extent that it authorizes military action under the conditions, for the specific purposes, and for the limited period of time set forth in this resolution.