

**SYRIA ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEBANESE
SOVEREIGNTY RESTORATION ACT OF 2003**

MARKUP
BEFORE THE
**COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H.R. 1828

OCTOBER 8, 2003

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**SYRIA ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEBANESE
SOVEREIGNTY RESTORATION ACT OF 2003**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:44 a.m. in Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Henry Hyde (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Chairman HYDE. The Committee will come to order.

Pursuant to notice, I now call up the bill H.R. 1828, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, for purposes of markup and move its favorable recommendation to the House.

Without objection, the bill will be considered as read and open for amendment at any point. The Chair recognizes the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, to explain the bill.

[H.R. 1828 follows:]

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1828

To halt Syrian support for terrorism, end its occupation of Lebanon, stop its development of weapons of mass destruction, cease its illegal importation of Iraqi oil and illegal shipments of weapons and other military items to Iraq, and by so doing hold Syria accountable for the serious international security problems it has caused in the Middle East, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 12, 2003

Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BALLENGER, Mr. BELL, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. FROST, Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin, Mr. HOEFFEL, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. JANKLOW, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. MATSUI, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. MICA, Mr. MOORE, Mr. NADLER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PENCE, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. REYNOLDS, Mr. ROSS, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. TURNER of Texas, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WEINER, Mr. WELLER, and Mr. WEXLER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

A BILL

To halt Syrian support for terrorism, end its occupation of Lebanon, stop its development of weapons of mass destruction, cease its illegal importation of Iraqi oil and illegal shipments of weapons and other military items to Iraq, and by so doing hold Syria accountable for

the serious international security problems it has caused in the Middle East, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) On September 20, 2001, President George
9 Bush stated at a joint session of Congress that
10 “[e]very nation, in every region, now has a decision
11 to make . . . [e]ither you are with us, or you are
12 with the terrorists . . . [f]rom this day forward, any
13 nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism
14 will be regarded by the United States as a hostile re-
15 gime”.

16 (2) On June 24, 2002, President Bush stated
17 “Syria must choose the right side in the war on ter-
18 ror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist
19 organizations”.

20 (3) United Nations Security Council Resolution
21 1373 (September 28, 2001) mandates that all states
22 “refrain from providing any form of support, active
23 or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist
24 acts”, take “the necessary steps to prevent the com-

1 mission of terrorist acts”, and “deny safe haven to
2 those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist
3 acts”.

4 (4) The Government of Syria is currently pro-
5 hibited by United States law from receiving United
6 States assistance because it has repeatedly provided
7 support for acts of international terrorism, as deter-
8 mined by the Secretary of State for purposes of sec-
9 tion 6(j)(1) of the Export Administration Act of
10 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2405(j)(1)) and other rel-
11 evant provisions of law.

12 (5) Although the Department of State lists
13 Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism and reports
14 that Syria provides “safe haven and support to sev-
15 eral terrorist groups”, fewer United States sanctions
16 apply with respect to Syria than with respect to any
17 other country that is listed as a state sponsor of ter-
18 rorism.

19 (6) According to the most recent Department of
20 State Patterns of Global Terrorism Report: “[Syria]
21 continued in 2001 to provide safehaven and logistics
22 support to a number of terrorist groups. Ahmad
23 Jibrils Popular Front for the Liberation of Pal-
24 estine-General Command (PFLP-GC), the Palestine
25 Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Abu Musa’s Fatah-the-

1 Intifadah, George Habashs Popular Front for the
2 Liberation of Palestine, and HAMAS continued to
3 maintain offices in Damascus. Syria provided
4 Hizballah, HAMAS, PFLP–GC, the PIJ, and other
5 terrorist organizations refuge and basing privileges
6 in Lebanons Bekaa Valley, under Syrian control.”.

7 (7) United Nations Security Council Resolution
8 520 (September 17, 1982) calls for “strict respect of
9 the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and polit-
10 ical independence of Lebanon under the sole and ex-
11 clusive authority of the Government of Lebanon
12 through the Lebanese Army throughout Lebanon”.

13 (8) More than 20,000 Syrian troops and secu-
14 rity personnel occupy much of the sovereign territory
15 of Lebanon exerting undue influence upon its gov-
16 ernment and undermining its political independence.

17 (9) Since 1990 the Senate and House of Rep-
18 resentatives have passed seven bills and resolutions
19 which call for the withdrawal of Syrian armed forces
20 from Lebanon.

21 (10) On March 3, 2003, Secretary of State
22 Colin Powell declared that it is the objective of the
23 United States to “let Lebanon be ruled by the Leba-
24 nese people without the presence of [the Syrian] oc-
25 cupation army”.

1 (11) Large and increasing numbers of the Leb-
2 anese people from across the political spectrum in
3 Lebanon have mounted peaceful and democratic
4 calls for the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from
5 Lebanese soil.

6 (12) Israel has withdrawn all of its armed
7 forces from Lebanon in accordance with United Na-
8 tions Security Council Resolution 425 (March 19,
9 1978), as certified by the United Nations Secretary
10 General.

11 (13) Even in the face of this United Nations
12 certification that acknowledged Israel's full compli-
13 ance with Resolution 425, Syria permits attacks by
14 Hizballah and other militant organizations on Israeli
15 outposts at Shebaa Farms, under the false guise
16 that it remains Lebanese land, and is also permit-
17 ting attacks on civilian targets in Israel.

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

22 (15) As a result, the Israeli-Lebanese border
23 and much of southern Lebanon is under the control
24 of Hizballah which continues to attack Israeli posi-
25 tions, allows Iranian Revolutionary Guards and

1 other militant groups to operate freely in the area,
2 and maintains thousands of rockets along Israel's
3 northern border, destabilizing the entire region.

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

14 (17) The United States is providing an esti-
15 mated \$36,870,000 in fiscal year 2003 in assistance
16 to the Lebanese people through private nongovern-
17 mental organizations, \$6,180,000 of which is pro-
18 vided to Lebanese-American educational institutions.

19 (18) In the State of the Union address on Jan-
20 uary 29, 2002, President Bush declared that the
21 United States will “work closely with our coalition to
22 deny terrorists and their state sponsors the mate-
23 rials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver
24 weapons of mass destruction”.

1 (19) The Government of Syria continues to de-
2 velop and deploy short and medium range ballistic
3 missiles.

4 (20) According to the December 2001 unclassi-
5 fied Central Intelligence Agency report entitled
6 “Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic
7 Missile Threat through 2015”, “Syria maintains a
8 ballistic missile and rocket force of hundreds of
9 FROG rockets, Scuds, and SS-21 SRBMs [and]
10 Syria has developed [chemical weapons] warheads
11 for its Scuds”.

12 (21) The Government of Syria is pursuing the
13 development and production of biological and chem-
14 ical weapons and has begun a suspicious nuclear re-
15 search program.

16 (22) According to the Central Intelligence
17 Agency’s “Unclassified Report to Congress on the
18 Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of
19 Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Muni-
20 tions”, released January 7, 2003: “[Syria] already
21 holds a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin but appar-
22 ently is trying to develop more toxic and persistent
23 nerve agents. Syria remains dependent on foreign
24 sources for key elements of its [chemical weapons]
25 program, including precursor chemicals and key pro-

1 duction equipment. It is highly probable that Syria
2 also is developing an offensive [biological weapons]
3 capability.”.

4 (23) On May 6, 2002, Under Secretary of State
5 for Arms Control and International Security, John
6 Bolton, stated: “The United States also knows that
7 Syria has long had a chemical warfare program. It
8 has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin and is en-
9 gaged in research and development of the more toxic
10 and persistent nerve agent VX. Syria, which has
11 signed but not ratified the [Biological Weapons Con-
12 vention], is pursuing the development of biological
13 weapons and is able to produce at least small
14 amounts of biological warfare agents.”.

15 (24) According to the Central Intelligence
16 Agency’s “Unclassified Report to Congress on the
17 Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of
18 Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Muni-
19 tions”, released January 7, 2003: “Russia and Syria
20 have approved a draft cooperative program on co-
21 operation on civil nuclear power. In principal, broad-
22 er access to Russian expertise provides opportunities
23 for Syria to expand its indigenous capabilities,
24 should it decide to pursue nuclear weapons.”.

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

10 (26) Syria is not a party to the Chemical Weap-
11 ons Convention or the Biological Weapons Conven-
12 tion, both of which entered into force on March 26,
13 1975.

14 (27) United Nations Security Council Resolu-
15 tion 661 (August 6, 1990) and subsequent relevant
16 resolutions restrict the sale of oil and other commod-
17 ities by Iraq, except to the extent authorized by
18 other relevant resolutions.

19 (28) Syria, a nonpermanent United Nations Se-
20 curity Council member, has been receiving between
21 150,000 and 200,000 barrels of oil per day from
22 Iraq at a substantial discount per barrel in violation
23 of United Nations Security Council Resolution 661
24 and subsequent resolutions. Recent estimates indi-
25 cate that as much as 230,000 barrels of oil per day

1 were shipped from Iraq to Syria in March 2003, or
2 up to 60,000 barrels per day more than in February
3 2003.

4 (29) Syria's illegal imports and transshipments
5 of Iraqi oil have earned Syria \$50,000,000 or more
6 per month as Syria continues to sell its own Syrian
7 oil at market prices.

8 (30) Syria's illegal imports and transshipments
9 of Iraqi oil have earned Iraq approximately
10 \$2,000,000 per day.

11 (31) Syrian President Bashar Assad promised
12 Secretary of State Powell in February 2001 to end
13 violations of Security Council Resolution 661 but
14 this pledge has not been fulfilled.

15 (32) United Nations Security Council Resolu-
16 tion 661 (August 6, 1990) and subsequent relevant
17 Security Council resolutions restrict the sale or sup-
18 ply of "weapons or any military equipment" to Iraq.

19 (33) The Government of Syria has utilized the
20 railway network linking Mosul, Iraq, to Aleppo,
21 Syria, to transfer a wide range of weaponry and
22 weapon systems to Iraq.

23 (34) On March 28, 2003, Secretary of Defense
24 Donald Rumsfeld warned: "[W]e have information
25 that shipments of military supplies have been cross-

1 ing the border from Syria into Iraq, including night-
2 vision goggles . . . These deliveries pose a direct
3 threat to the lives of coalition forces. We consider
4 such trafficking as hostile acts, and will hold the
5 Syrian government accountable for such ship-
6 ments.”.

7 (35) According to Article 23(1) of the United
8 Nations Charter, members of the United Nations are
9 elected as nonpermanent members of the United Na-
10 tions Security Council with “due regard being spe-
11 cially paid, in the first instance to the contribution
12 of members of the United Nations to the mainte-
13 nance of international peace and security and to
14 other purposes of the Organization”.

15 (36) Despite Article 23(1) of the United Na-
16 tions Charter, Syria was elected on October 8, 2001,
17 to a 2-year term as a nonpermanent member of the
18 United Nations Security Council beginning January
19 1, 2002, and served as President of the Security
20 Council during June 2002.

21 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

22 It is the sense of Congress that—

23 (1) the Government of Syria should imme-
24 diately and unconditionally halt support for ter-
25 rorism, permanently and openly declare its total re-

1 nunciation of all forms of terrorism, and close all
2 terrorist offices and facilities in Syria, including the
3 offices of Hamas, Hizballah, the Popular Front for
4 the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front
5 for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command;

6 (2) the Government of Syria should imme-
7 diately declare its commitment to completely with-
8 draw its armed forces, including military, para-
9 military, and security forces, from Lebanon, and set
10 a firm timetable for such withdrawal;

11 (3) the Government of Lebanon should deploy
12 the Lebanese armed forces to all areas of Lebanon,
13 including South Lebanon, in accordance with United
14 Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (September
15 17, 1982), in order to assert the sovereignty of the
16 Lebanese state over all of its territory, and should
17 evict all terrorist and foreign forces from southern
18 Lebanon, including Hizballah and the Iranian Revo-
19 lutionary Guards;

20 (4) the Government of Syria should halt the de-
21 velopment and deployment of medium and long
22 range surface to surface ballistic missiles and cease
23 the development and production of biological and
24 chemical weapons;

1 (5) the Government of Syria should halt illegal
2 imports and transshipments of Iraqi oil and illegal
3 sales and supplies of weapons and military-related
4 equipment to Iraq and come into full compliance
5 with United Nations Security Council Resolution
6 661 and subsequent relevant resolutions;

7 (6) the Governments of Lebanon and Syria
8 should enter into serious unconditional bilateral ne-
9 gotiations with the Government of Israel in order to
10 realize a full and permanent peace;

11 (7) the United States should continue to pro-
12 vide humanitarian and educational assistance to the
13 people of Lebanon only through appropriate private,
14 nongovernmental organizations and appropriate
15 international organizations, until such time as the
16 Government of Lebanon asserts sovereignty and con-
17 trol over all of its territory and borders and achieves
18 full political independence, as called for in United
19 Nations Security Council Resolution 520; and

20 (8) being in violation of several key United Na-
21 tions Security Council resolutions and pursuing poli-
22 cies which undermine international peace and secu-
23 rity, Syria should not have been permitted to join
24 the United Nations Security Council or serve as the

1 Security Council's President, and should be removed
2 from the Security Council.

3 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

4 It is the policy of the United States that—

5 (1) Syria will be held responsible for attacks
6 committed by Hizballah and other terrorist groups
7 with offices or other facilities in Syria, or bases in
8 areas of Lebanon occupied by Syria;

9 (2) the United States shall impede Syria's abil-
10 ity to support acts of international terrorism and ef-
11 forts to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruc-
12 tion;

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

21 (4) efforts against Hizballah will be expanded
22 given the recognition that Hizballah is equally or
23 more capable than al Qaeda;

24 (5) the full restoration of Lebanon's sov-
25 ereignty, political independence, and territorial in-

1 tegrity is in the national security interest of the
2 United States;

3 (6) Syria is in violation of United Nations Se-
4 curity Council Resolution 520 (September 17, 1982)
5 through its continued occupation of Lebanese terri-
6 tory and its eneroachment upon its political inde-
7 pendence;

8 (7) Syria's obligation to withdraw from Leb-
9 anon is not conditioned upon progress in the Israeli-
10 Syrian or Israeli-Lebanese peace process but derives
11 from Syria's obligation under Security Council Reso-
12 lution 520;

13 (8) Syria's acquisition of weapons of mass de-
14 struction and ballistic missile programs threaten the
15 security of the Middle East and the national security
16 interests of the United States;

17 (9) Syria is in violation of United Nations Se-
18 curity Council Resolution 661 (August 6, 1990) and
19 subsequent relevant resolutions through its contin-
20 ued purchase of oil from Iraq and shipments of
21 weapons and other military equipment to Iraq;

22 (10) Syria will be held accountable for any
23 harm to Coalition armed forces of Operation Iraqi
24 Freedom caused by shipments of military supplies
25 from Syria to Iraq; and

1 (11) the United States will not provide any as-
2 sistance to Syria and will oppose multilateral assist-
3 ance for Syria until Syria withdraws its armed
4 forces from Lebanon, halts the development and de-
5 ployment of weapons of mass destruction and me-
6 dium and long range surface to surface ballistic mis-
7 siles, and complies with Security Council Resolution
8 661 and subsequent relevant resolutions.

9 **SEC. 5. PENALTIES AND AUTHORIZATION.**

10 (a) PENALTIES.—Until the President makes the de-
11 termination that Syria meets the requirements described
12 in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (d) and cer-
13 tifies such determination to Congress in accordance with
14 such subsection—

15 (1) the President shall prohibit the export to
16 Syria of any item, including the issuance of a license
17 for the export of any item, on the United States Mu-
18 nitions List or Commerce Control List of dual-use
19 items in the Export Administration Regulations (15
20 C.F.R. part 730 et seq.); and

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

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

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

3 (C) Restrict Syrian diplomats in Wash-
4 ington, D.C., and at the United Nations in New
5 York City, to travel only within a 25-mile ra-
6 dius of Washington, D.C., or the United Na-
7 tions headquarters building, respectively.

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

11 (E) Reduce United States diplomatic con-
12 tacts with Syria (other than those contacts re-
13 quired to protect United States interests or
14 carry out the purposes of this Act).

15 (F) Block transactions in any property in
16 which the Government of Syria has any inter-
17 est, by any person, or with respect to any prop-
18 erty, subject to the jurisdiction of the United
19 States.

20 (b) WAIVER.—The President may waive the applica-
21 tion of paragraph (2) of subsection (a) for one or more
22 6-month periods if the President determines that it is in
23 the vital national security interest of the United States
24 to do so and transmits to Congress a report that contains
25 the reasons therefor.

1 (c) AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA
2 AND LEBANON.—If the President—

3 (1) makes the determination that Syria meets
4 the requirements described in paragraphs (1)
5 through (4) of subsection (d) and certifies such de-
6 termination to Congress in accordance with such
7 subsection;

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

13 (3) determines that the Government of Syria is
14 strictly respecting the sovereignty, territorial integ-
15 rity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon
16 under the sole and exclusive authority of the Govern-
17 ment of Lebanon through the Lebanese army
18 throughout Lebanon, as required under paragraph
19 (4) of United Nations Security Council Resolution
20 520 (1982),

21 then the President is authorized to provide assistance to
22 Syria and Lebanon under chapter 1 of Part I of the For-
23 eign Assistance Act of 1961 (relating to development as-
24 sistance).

1 (d) CERTIFICATION.—A certification under this sub-
2 section is a certification transmitted to the appropriate
3 congressional committees of a determination made by the
4 President that—

5 (1) the Government of Syria does not provide
6 support for international terrorist groups and does
7 not allow terrorist groups, such as Hamas,
8 Hizballah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of
9 Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation
10 of Palestine—General Command to maintain facili-
11 ties in Syria;

12 (2) the Government of Syria has withdrawn all
13 Syrian military, intelligence, and other security per-
14 sonnel from Lebanon;

15 (3) the Government of Syria has ceased the de-
16 velopment and deployment of medium and long
17 range surface to surface ballistic missiles and has
18 ceased the development and production of biological
19 and chemical weapons; and

20 (4) the Government of Syria is no longer in vio-
21 lation of United Nations Security Council Resolution
22 661 and subsequent relevant resolutions.

23 **SEC. 6. REPORT.**

24 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the date
25 of the enactment of this Act, and every 12 months there-

1 after until the conditions described in paragraphs (1)
2 through (4) of section 5(c) are satisfied, the Secretary of
3 State shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
4 mittees a report on—

5 (1) Syria’s progress toward meeting the condi-
6 tions described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of sec-
7 tion 5(d);

8 (2) connections, if any, between individual ter-
9 rorists and terrorist groups which maintain offices,
10 training camps, or other facilities on Syrian terri-
11 tory, or operate in areas of Lebanon occupied by the
12 Syrian armed forces, and the attacks against the
13 United States that occurred on September 11, 2001,
14 and other terrorist attacks on the United States or
15 its citizens, installations, or allies; and

16 (3) how the United States is increasing its ef-
17 forts against Hizballah given the recognition that
18 Hizballah is equally or more capable than al Qaeda.

19 (b) FORM.—The report submitted under subsection
20 (a) shall be in unclassified form but may include a classi-
21 fied annex.

22 **SEC. 7. DEFINITION OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL**
23 **COMMITTEES.**

24 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional com-
25 mittees” means the Committee on International Relations

22

21

- 1 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
- 2 Foreign Relations of the Senate.

○

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I very much appreciate your bringing H.R. 1828, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, before our Committee today.

The Syria Accountability Act enjoys wide bipartisan support. At the present time, we have over 280 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, including House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, Majority Whip Roy Blunt, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer.

Why such strong support? Because threats posed by the Syrian regime for years have been of grave concern to us in the Congress. Syria is a charter member of the state sponsors of terrorism list. It reportedly condones al-Qaeda's use of Lebanon and supports and harbors Hizballah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the PFLPGC and Hamas, providing basing privileges and camps.

Syrian sponsored groups have perpetrated acts of terrorism against Americans, most notably the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Syrian-occupied Lebanon in 1983, which killed 241 American Marines, as well as suicide bombings in Israel which have claimed the lives of scores of innocent Israeli and American citizens.

Syria provided assistance to the terrorists who perpetrated the attacks on the Khobar Towers in 1996, killing 19 American servicemen; and recently in Iraq, despite repeated American warnings, there has been Syrian involvement in a series of attacks against coalition forces.

Syria allowed military equipment to flow into Iraq prior to and during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Syria is still permitting these terrorists to pass into Iraq to attack and kill our service members. Most of these so-called volunteers or irregulars have been Syrians, and most of those who are not have carried Syrian travel documents, in some cases specifically marked Reason for Entry: Jihad. Length of Stay: Indefinite.

In fact, Syria's foreign minister stated: "Syria's interest is to see the invaders defeated in Iraq," adding that that resistance is extremely important. Further, just 2 weeks ago Ambassador Paul Bremer stated during his testimony before the Committee that the number of third country national detainees we now have is 278, of which 123 are from Syria. "We believe that these are rat lines," as they call them, "from Syria into Iraq where both fighters and in many cases terrorists are still coming in." That is his exact quote.

In addition to the terrorist threats, Syria has increased and diversified its weapons of mass destruction program to pose a potentially serious threat to our interest in the region, with the Syrian defense minister indicating in an April 2000 article: "The Syrian military plan is to integrate biological weapons in its tactical and strategical arsenal." This is not a United States reference, but a Syrian quote.

To address and evaluate Syria's support for terrorism, its weapons of mass destruction program and its violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, which I Chair along with my wonderful colleague from New York, Mr. Elliot Engel, has held hearings and nu-

merous open and classified hearings and briefings addressing these important issues.

The final assessment, based on all of these discussions, is that the time has come to hold Syria accountable for its actions. The Congress of the United States cannot allow Syria to continue activities that could pose a threat to the safety of the United States and our allies.

The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act offers the Administration the right mechanism to press the Syrian regime to immediately halt its destructive policies. This act bans all military and dual use exports to Syria. It requires the imposition of two or more of the wide range of sanctions provided for in the bill. It includes a Presidential waiver on the latter sanctions if it is vital to the national security of the United States.

It authorizes the provision of assistance to Syria only if the President certifies, among other requirements, that Syria is not providing support for international terrorists, that it has withdrawn all military, security and intelligence personnel from Lebanon, that it has stopped its development and deployment of ballistic missiles and that it has ceased its weapons of mass destruction program.

The bill also has a requirement calling on the Secretary of State to report on the progress made by Syria on the withdrawal from Lebanon, the connections between Syrian sponsored and supported terrorists or terrorist groups to the 9/11 attacks and on United States efforts against Hizballah.

I will be offering an amendment, Mr. Chairman, in the nature of a substitute that will update the bill to address and reflect the current situation with respect to Syria, particularly its linkage to attacks against coalition forces, United States citizens and other innocents in Iraq.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for bringing this important measure before our Committee today, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important legislation that Mr. Engel and I are offering today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman from California, the Ranking Member of this Committee, Mr. Lantos.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me first commend you for scheduling this truly historic markup.

At the outset, I want to pay tribute to my good friend from Florida, Ms. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, for her leadership, and I want to identify myself with her entire statement. I also want to commend my friend from New York, Mr. Engel, for his very effective leadership on this matter.

Mr. Chairman, nobody in Damascus should be surprised by our action today on this legislation. You might even say that the Syrian Government is the moving spirit behind it. As you know, Mr. Chairman, I visited Syria about 6 months ago and had a long meeting with President Bashar al-Assad. I warned him at the time that this legislation would be marked up in our Committee on its way to passage in the House and in the Senate unless Syria changed its ways in fundamental ways. President Assad understood me per-

fectly well. I found that he was very familiar with the Syria Accountability Act.

Secretary of State Powell visited Assad 1 week after I did and basically read him the same list of demands, which all of us here are so familiar with. Syria must close terrorist offices in Damascus. Syria must end its support of Hizballah on Israel's northern border. Syria must cease its function as a transit point for Iranian weaponry designed and destined for Hizballah.

It must remove its 17,000 occupying troops from Lebanon. It must remove the thousands of Syrian military intelligence officers who honeycomb Lebanese society. There is not a Lebanese institution which is not effectively run by Syrian intelligence officers. It must stop working on its weapons of mass destruction. It must stop undermining the efforts of our coalition in Iraq. It must free its political prisoners, and it must terminate its hostile action in Iraq.

After my meeting with President Asad, I repeated my warning at a press conference in Damascus; and subsequently upon returning to Washington, I wrote a detailed letter to President Asad reviewing the issues I raised and reminding him that congressional action was looming unless he took appropriate action.

I ask unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, to put my letter to President Asad in the record.

Chairman HYDE. Without objection. So ordered.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After 6 months of waiting, we have seen that Syria has done absolutely nothing to comply with the long list of overdue demands that Secretary of State Powell, and a week earlier I, had submitted to him. Syria has made some cosmetic changes, moving terrorists from one address to another, but it is self-evident that nothing has changed in Syria's fundamental policy with respect to terrorism, its position in Iraq and its role as a country in the region.

I pointed out to Mr. Asad that soon there will be four friends of the United States surrounding him—Turkey, Jordan, Israel and Iraq—and the notion that the second largest dictatorship in this region can continue its policies ad infinitum and ad nauseam despite the tremendous changes which are underway in the region is simply not realistic.

I want to commend the Administration, which used to oppose this legislation. While it has formally not yet endorsed it, it is clear that its new stance represents implicit support for the Syrian Accountability Act.

Mr. Chairman, I went to Syria with a sincere desire to have that government recognize the new realities in the region. After all, there are plenty of examples for this. Pakistan and their President Musharraf changed its policy dramatically from being a supporter of the Taliban, from being a safe haven for terrorists. It is now assisting in the fight against terrorism. It was our hope that Syria would do the same.

Events of this past weekend reinforce the importance and timeliness of our bill. The training camp for terrorists on Syrian territory is an outrageous affront to the entire civilized world. Israel's action against this camp could hardly be more justified. Twenty Israelis are dead, and that is the equivalent of 1,000 Americans on a basis

of proportional population ratios. Sixty Israelis are injured, which would be equivalent to 3,000 Americans being injured.

Mr. Chairman, if a neighboring country were supporting a terrorist group that killed 1,000 Americans and injured 3,000 Americans in one incident, who among us would not call on our government to demonstrate determination? As President Bush put it on Monday, we would be doing the same thing as Israel. I could not agree more strongly with the President.

Mr. Chairman, I wish that this markup had never taken place, but the Syrian regime has made it imperative that we do proceed with this markup. Despite warning after warning, it has refused to heed the dictates of common good sense. The door to good relations with the United States has been wide open to Syria, but the Syrian regime has contemptuously slammed it shut. Now it must pay the consequences.

I strongly support this legislation and urge all of my colleagues to do likewise.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The letter referred to follows:]

U.S. CONGRESS,
HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, May 23, 2003.

His Excellency, PRESIDENT BASHAR AL-ASAD,
Damascus,
Syrian Arab Republic.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Once again I would like to thank you for receiving me in your office recently. Our discussion was valuable, and I believe it could mark the beginning of a productive dialogue that benefits both our nations.

I have therefore been surprised and deeply dismayed by Syria's failure to take truly meaningful action on the issues we discussed in the weeks since my visit. Notwithstanding press reports that some of the offices of Palestinian terrorist organizations in Damascus may have been closed, I am deeply disappointed by your failure to confirm this definitively and to affirm that their closure is the result of a decision by the Syrian government, not by the terrorists. I was also disturbed by your failure to join the U.N. Security Council consensus in favor of UNSC Resolution 1483 ending sanctions on Iraq and by the Syrian state media's harsh and inaccurate accusations against the U.S. regarding that resolution.

Mr. President, closing the offices of Palestinian terrorist organizations is the most basic of steps you must take if we are to make a start toward improving U.S.-Syrian relations, as you and I discussed. But it is crucial not only that you actually close the offices and prevent these groups and their partisans from carrying out activities in Syria but that you also make clear, publicly and formally, that you are doing so. Only if such actions are executed in a transparent and definitive manner can Syria demonstrate to the world that it opposes the actions of these terrorist organizations. A stealthy closing of the offices, or a sham closing in which terrorist personnel continue to carry out their activities less publicly and from different locations—or a closing which you claim is strictly the result of the terrorists' decision, as you so far have done—will only leave the world skeptical of your real intentions and will prevent you from reaping any benefits in U.S.-Syrian bilateral relations.

I was pleased that, in our meeting, you said you oppose terrorism "anywhere." Since the Palestinian groups with offices in Damascus have claimed credit for numerous terrorist attacks in Israel—and sometimes have issued these claims from Damascus itself—they surely have no business in Syria, and you should have no trouble making public declarations to that effect. As we agreed, there is no point in discussing semantics. Whether one calls them information offices or terrorist headquarters, it is imperative that they be closed and their cadre expelled—and that this decision be publicly announced and definitively implemented—if we hope to begin a new era in bilateral relations.

You will recall that we discussed the Syria Accountability Act. I told you at that time that, depending on your decisions and actions, Congressional action on that bill will be delayed, halted, or accelerated. I also told you that I would be looking for the earliest possible positive action on your part and in particular in the immediate

aftermath of the Powell visit. Based on what I have seen and read thus far, such positive action from you has not been sufficiently forthcoming. Should that continue to be so, I will have no choice but to join with like-minded colleagues in the near future to accelerate action on the Syrian Accountability Act.

So that there be no misunderstanding, I think it is important that I review with you the content of our discussion and my reflections on it. As I indicated to you, Syria made many regrettable decisions in the months leading up to the Iraq war, during it, and in its immediate aftermath. These mistakes were reflected in both your statements and actions during this period. My impression during our meeting was that you understand this. In fact, it is crucial that your future performance fully reflect this understanding, that you expel any Iraqi officials and Saddam Hussein family members who took refuge in Syria, that you seal your border so as to prevent the smuggling of arms and other military equipment into Iraq as well as the infiltration of anti-US personnel, and that you fully cooperate with the United States's Iraq policy in all other ways. Indeed, my overwhelming concern—and I believe that of all of my colleagues in the U.S. Congress—is that you cooperate to the fullest extent with ongoing United States efforts in Iraq. Based on Syria's absence from yesterday's UN Security Council vote, you clearly have not comprehended the urgency of this concern.

Beyond cooperation regarding Iraq, several steps are necessary in order to reverse the recent erosion of bilateral ties. Let me once again enumerate these steps:

- 1) The offices of the Palestinian terrorist groups must be closed and their activities ended immediately, and this decision be publicly announced and definitively implemented, as discussed above.
- 2) All military assistance to Hizballah, both directly and as a conduit for Iran, must be terminated.
- 3) Hizballah must be removed from the Lebanese-Israeli border area as well as from the area of Shebaa Farms, and the Lebanese Armed Forces must be deployed throughout the length of the border. Hizballah also must cease its attacks on Israeli territory and personnel, including in the Shebaa Farms area.
- 4) Hizballah must be disarmed, as every other Lebanese militia has been.
- 5) Iranian Revolutionary Guard cadre must be expelled from Lebanon.
- 6) All terrorist bases in Lebanon and Syria must be closed, and all other support for terrorism must end.
- 7) Syrian military forces must be evacuated from Lebanon.
- 8) All Israeli prisoners held by Hizballah or Syria must be released.
- 9) Syria must take immediate steps to address the many serious human rights problems addressed in the U.S. State Department's recent human rights report. In particular, it must release the academicians, journalists, and members of the Syrian parliament currently in prison for crimes of speech and thought.
- 10) Hostile anti-U.S. propaganda in state media must be terminated.

All of these steps are required urgently, but again I emphasize that an affirmative decision to close the offices of the Palestinian groups in Damascus must be announced and implemented definitively and immediately.

During our meeting, you asked me whether I expect you to undertake these actions "for free." To reiterate, I am not asking anything for free. In English, there is a saying that virtue is its own reward. Indeed, a state that supports terrorist groups and violates the sovereignty of a neighboring nation cannot be fully accepted as member in good standing of the civilized world in the twenty-first century. But of course I understand that you were asking what the political pay-off would be for Syria. The reward, Mr. President, is immeasurable and of the greatest significance. It is the goodwill of the Congress, the Administration, and the American people. This goodwill is a priceless commodity, and it has long been lacking in our bilateral relations precisely because of Syria's failure to take the necessary actions I enumerated in our talk and have underscored here. From the establishment of goodwill all other benefits flow.

If you show clear indication that you are progressing in the direction I outlined—beginning with full cooperation regarding Iraq and the immediate and definitive closing of the offices of the Palestinian terrorist organizations and the cessation of their activities on Syrian or Lebanese soil—I will do everything I can to prevent Congressional consideration of the Syria Accountability Act. Let me add something else: Once it would be fully clear that Syria no longer belongs on the list of state-

sponsors of terrorism, nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to advocate its removal from that list.

Absent such indication, however, I can only foresee the worst. I must again underscore the importance of your acting immediately. Time is running out.

You asked that I sound out the Israelis about their interest in pursuing negotiations regarding the Golan Heights and Syrian-Israeli peace. I did indeed raise this matter with Prime Minister Sharon during my visit to Israel. He assured me that he is ready to engage in negotiations, on an unconditional basis, at any time. I would be delighted to be of any further assistance to you on this matter.

Let me reiterate that I foresee the prospect of a new and positive era in U.S.-Syrian bilateral relations. The recent war in Iraq is a cataclysmic development that will usher in great changes in the region. A Middle East that is more politically liberal and increasingly friendly to the United States is on the horizon. This trend is typified by some of your bordering neighbors, such as Jordan, Israel, Turkey, and, soon no doubt, the new Iraq. It is my fervent wish that Syria be seen as fully in step with these regional trends. It is my firm conviction that Syria indeed must be fully in step with these trends if U.S.-Syrian relations are to improve and prosper rather than suffer still further damage. The path our relations follow will depend, Mr. President, on your vision, your leadership, and, most important, your willingness to take bold decisions along the lines we have discussed.

Sincerely,

TOM LANTOS, *Ranking Democratic Member.*

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Lantos.

We will take one more opening statement, and then we will get to the markup. All other Members who have statements may be received into the record and printed in the record, without objection.

Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I very much appreciate your holding today's markup on H.R. 1828, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003. I want you to know, Mr. Chairman, that I greatly appreciate your assistance and support and that of our Ranking Member, Mr. Lantos, as well, as we move this bill forward.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the lead Republican sponsor of this bipartisan bill, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. She has worked very hard on behalf of this bill, and I want everyone to know it has been a delight to work with her.

Mr. Chairman, it has been a long road. When I sat down with my staff nearly 2 years ago and wrote this bill, we had hoped that Syrian behavior would change and that perhaps there would not be a necessity for a bill like this. Unfortunately, in the 2-year period not only has Syrian behavior not changed. It has indeed gotten worse.

It has become plain to ordinary Americans, Members of Congress, across party lines and officials in the Administration, what has been plain to me for many years—that Syria is among the most dangerous, destabilizing countries in the Middle East.

Syria has been on our State Department's terrorist list since the inception of the list in 1979, and yet it currently is the only member on that list with which we have normal diplomatic relations. I never understood that. I did not understand it 2 years ago, I did not understand it 20 years ago, and I do not understand it now.

Syria has occupied and controlled Lebanon for over 2 decades, ostensibly to keep the peace; in reality, destabilizing Lebanon and strangling the legitimate rights of the Lebanese people. Syria possesses a fleet of scud missiles, which can deliver its arsenal of chemical weapons, and it is now permitting terrorists to enter Iraq to attack and kill United States troops.

As President Bush said on June 24, 2002, and I quote:

“Syria must choose the right side in the war on terror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist organizations.”

In fact, terrorist groups that have thrived under Syrian protection have taken American lives on several occasions. In 1983, Hizballah killed 241 United States Marines in a terrorist attack near Beirut and killed more in the bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex the following year.

Syria also plays host to a number of terrorist groups in its capital, Damascus, and terrorist camps throughout Syria and Syrian occupied Lebanon. In fact, the leader of the Palestine Islamic Jihad, which just murdered 19 innocent people in the Israeli city of Haifa, lives in Damascus. Not only has the Palestinian Islamic Jihad murdered scores of Israelis, but it has killed several United States citizens. Israel was absolutely correct and justified in its recent attack on the Palestinian Islamic Jihad training camp in Syria.

The threat of collusion between terrorist groups and the Government of Syria must be addressed forcefully, especially because of Syria’s arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Undersecretary of State John Bolton testified last month before our Middle East Subcommittee, and I quote him:

“Since the 1970s, Syria has pursued what is now one of the most advanced Arab states chemical weapons capabilities and is continuing to develop an offensive biological weapons capability.”

The CIA has echoed these concerns about Syrian weapons of mass destruction. An unclassified CIA report released earlier this year stated that . . .

“Damascus already holds a stockpile of the nerve agent Saren, but apparently is trying to develop more toxic and persistent nerve agents.”

Interestingly, the CIA’s annual weapons of mass destruction report discloses that Syria is developing a nuclear research center. For a country with Syria’s history with weapons of mass destruction, this development is a cause for serious concern.

Even with all this damning evidence about the threat Damascus poses to the United States and the world, some have suggested that we should not hold Syria accountable. The reasons they give have varied, but the most common is that Syria has somehow helped the United States in our war on terror.

Damascus is at best two-faced, throwing a few small bones of information to American sources while continuing to aid the most violent terrorist groups in the Middle East. As General Aoun, the former leader of Lebanon, has said, in Lebanon Syria acts as both the arsonist and the fireman. It starts the fires, then puts them out and wants everybody to pat them on the back and tell them how wonderful they are. This is not an acceptable deal in the post 9/11 world.

Syria must be made aware that we are not fooled by their double dealing. In response to these dangerous provocations, I and Representative Ros-Lehtinen, and in the Senate Senators Boxer and

Santorum, introduced the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. Under this bill, unless Syria meets four key criteria it will face several sanctions.

First and foremost, Syria must end its support for terrorism. It must close the offices and end the operations of the Palestinian terrorist groups in Damascus and clean out the Lebanese Beka Valley, a hornet's nest of the most deadly fundamentalist militants in the world. It must also stop harboring terrorist groups and come into full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, which directs all countries to fight terror.

Secondly, Syria must withdraw its armed forces from Lebanon. Chairman HYDE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Okay.

Chairman HYDE. Without objection, the gentleman may have 2 additional minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For years, Lebanon was a window on the west within the Arab world. Nothing will do more for peace and the promotion of democracy in the Middle East than a free and sovereign Lebanon.

U.N. Security Council Resolutions 425 and 520 call clearly for the removal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, and with strict respect for Lebanese sovereignty the U.N. long ago certified Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanon, but the Syrian military occupation remains. It is time to let the Lebanese, not the Syrians, run Lebanon.

Thirdly, Syria must halt development and procurement of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. The Syrian force of hundreds of scud missiles topped with unconventional warheads poses a serious danger to the Middle East.

Finally, Syria must take intermediate steps to stop guerrillas from traveling from Syria to Iraq to attack and kill American troops. We all stand together in demanding that Syria stop permitting transit of militants and shipments of weapons into Iraq.

I am pleased to inform our Committee that this bipartisan legislation has gathered 283 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, including a majority of Democrats and Republicans in the House and on this Committee and the Majority and Minority leaders and the Majority and Minority Whips of the House. The Senate version of our bill tells a similar story, with 76 co-sponsors, including a majority of both parties and a majority on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the Ranking Member for moving ahead today with this markup; I thank the Chair of the Subcommittee for her hard work on the bill and all 33 Members of this Committee who have co-sponsored this important bill. I urge the Committee to pass this legislation with a clear and strong vote today.

I yield back.

Chairman HYDE. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, for purposes of an amendment.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment in the nature of a substitute at the desk.

Chairman HYDE. The clerk will designate the amendment.

Ms. RUSH. Amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. Strike all after the enacting—

Chairman HYDE. Without objection, the amendment in the nature of a substitute will be considered as read and will be considered as original text for purposes of amendment.

[The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1828, offered by Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, follows:]

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 1828
OFFERED BY MS. ROS-LEHTINEN**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

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

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

5 Congress makes the following findings:

6 (1) On September 20, 2001, President George
7 Bush stated at a joint session of Congress that
8 “[e]very nation, in every region, now has a decision
9 to make . . . [e]ither you are with us, or you are
10 with the terrorists . . . [f]rom this day forward, any
11 nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism
12 will be regarded by the United States as a hostile re-
13 gime”.

14 (2) On June 24, 2002, President Bush stated
15 “Syria must choose the right side in the war on ter-
16 ror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist
17 organizations”.

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

9 (4) The Government of Syria is currently pro-
10 hibited by United States law from receiving United
11 States assistance because it has repeatedly provided
12 support for acts of international terrorism, as deter-
13 mined by the Secretary of State for purposes of sec-
14 tion 6(j)(1) of the Export Administration Act of
15 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2405(j)(1)) and other rel-
16 evant provisions of law.

17 (5) Although the Department of State lists
18 Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism and reports
19 that Syria provides “safe haven and support to sev-
20 eral terrorist groups”, fewer United States sanctions
21 apply with respect to Syria than with respect to any
22 other country that is listed as a state sponsor of ter-
23 rorism.

24 (6) Terrorist groups, including Hizballah,
25 Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular

1 Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Pop-
2 ular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General
3 Command, maintain offices, training camps, and
4 other facilities on Syrian territory, and operate in
5 areas of Lebanon occupied by the Syrian armed
6 forces and receive supplies from Iran through Syria.

7 (7) United Nations Security Council Resolution
8 520 (September 17, 1982) calls for “strict respect of
9 the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and polit-
10 ical independence of Lebanon under the sole and ex-
11 clusive authority of the Government of Lebanon
12 through the Lebanese Army throughout Lebanon”.

13 (8) Approximately 20,000 Syrian troops and se-
14 curity personnel occupy much of the sovereign terri-
15 tory of Lebanon exerting undue influence upon its
16 government and undermining its political independ-
17 ence.

18 (9) Since 1990 the Senate and House of Rep-
19 resentatives have passed seven bills and resolutions
20 which call for the withdrawal of Syrian armed forces
21 from Lebanon.

22 (10) On March 3, 2003, Secretary of State
23 Colin Powell declared that it is the objective of the
24 United States to “let Lebanon be ruled by the Leba-

1 nese people without the presence of [the Syrian] oc-
2 cupation army”.

3 (11) Large and increasing numbers of the Leb-
4 anese people from across the political spectrum in
5 Lebanon have mounted peaceful and democratic
6 calls for the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from
7 Lebanese soil.

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

13 (13) Even in the face of this United Nations
14 certification that acknowledged Israel’s full compli-
15 ance with Security Council Resolution 425, Syrian-
16 and Iranian-sponsored Hizballah continues to attack
17 Israeli outposts at Shebaa Farms, under the false
18 guise that it remains Lebanese land, and Syrian-
19 and Iranian-sponsored Hizballah and other militant
20 organizations continue to attack civilian targets in
21 Israel.

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

1 (15) As a result, the Israeli-Lebanese border
2 and much of southern Lebanon is under the control
3 of Hizballah which continues to attack Israeli posi-
4 tions, allows Iranian Revolutionary Guards and
5 other militant groups to operate freely in the area,
6 and maintains thousands of rockets along Israel's
7 northern border, destabilizing the entire region.

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

19 (17) In the State of the Union address on Jan-
20 uary 29, 2002, President Bush declared that the
21 United States will “work closely with our coalition to
22 deny terrorists and their state sponsors the mate-
23 rials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver
24 weapons of mass destruction”.

1 (18) The Government of Syria continues to de-
2 velop and deploy short and medium range ballistic
3 missiles.

4 (19) According to the December 2001 unclassi-
5 fied Central Intelligence Agency report entitled
6 “Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic
7 Missile Threat through 2015”, “Syria maintains a
8 ballistic missile and rocket force of hundreds of
9 FROG rockets, Scuds, and SS-21 SRBMs [and]
10 Syria has developed [chemical weapons] warheads
11 for its Scuds”.

12 (20) The Government of Syria is pursuing the
13 development and production of biological and chem-
14 ical weapons and has a nuclear research and devel-
15 opment program that is cause for concern.

16 (21) According to the Central Intelligence
17 Agency’s “Unclassified Report to Congress on the
18 Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of
19 Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Muni-
20 tions”, released January 7, 2003: “[Syria] already
21 holds a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin but appar-
22 ently is trying to develop more toxic and persistent
23 nerve agents. Syria remains dependent on foreign
24 sources for key elements of its [chemical weapons]
25 program, including precursor chemicals and key pro-

1 duction equipment. It is highly probable that Syria
2 also is developing an offensive [biological weapons]
3 capability.”.

4 (22) On May 6, 2002, Under Secretary of State
5 for Arms Control and International Security, John
6 Bolton, stated: “The United States also knows that
7 Syria has long had a chemical warfare program. It
8 has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin and is en-
9 gaged in research and development of the more toxic
10 and persistent nerve agent VX. Syria, which has
11 signed but not ratified the [Biological Weapons Con-
12 vention], is pursuing the development of biological
13 weapons and is able to produce at least small
14 amounts of biological warfare agents.”.

15 (23) According to the Central Intelligence
16 Agency’s “Unclassified Report to Congress on the
17 Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of
18 Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Muni-
19 tions”, released January 7, 2003: “Russia and Syria
20 have approved a draft cooperative program on co-
21 operation on civil nuclear power. In principal, broad-
22 er access to Russian expertise provides opportunities
23 for Syria to expand its indigenous capabilities,
24 should it decide to pursue nuclear weapons.”.

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

10 (25) Syria is not a party to the Chemical Weap-
11 ons Convention or the Biological Weapons Conven-
12 tion, which entered into force on April 29, 1997, and
13 on March 26, 1975, respectively.

14 (26) Syrian President Bashar Assad promised
15 Secretary of State Powell in February 2001 to end
16 violations of Security Council Resolution 661, which
17 restricted the sale of oil and other commodities by
18 Saddam Hussein's regime, except to the extent au-
19 thorized by other relevant resolutions, but this
20 pledge was never fulfilled.

21 (27) Syria's illegal imports and transshipments
22 of Iraqi oil during Saddam Hussein's regime earned
23 Syria \$50,000,000 or more per month as Syria con-
24 tinued to sell its own Syrian oil at market prices.

1 (28) Syria’s illegal imports and transshipments
2 of Iraqi oil earned Saddam Hussein’s regime
3 \$2,000,000 per day.

4 (29) The Government of Syria also utilized the
5 railway network linking Mosul, Iraq, to Aleppo,
6 Syria, to transfer a wide range of weaponry and
7 weapon systems to Saddam Hussein’s regime.

8 (30) On March 28, 2003, Secretary of Defense
9 Donald Rumsfeld warned: “[W]e have information
10 that shipments of military supplies have been cross-
11 ing the border from Syria into Iraq, including night-
12 vision goggles . . . These deliveries pose a direct
13 threat to the lives of coalition forces. We consider
14 such trafficking as hostile acts, and will hold the
15 Syrian government accountable for such ship-
16 ments.”.

17 (31) According to Article 23(1) of the United
18 Nations Charter, members of the United Nations are
19 elected as nonpermanent members of the United Na-
20 tions Security Council with “due regard being spe-
21 cially paid, in the first instance to the contribution
22 of members of the United Nations to the mainte-
23 nance of international peace and security and to
24 other purposes of the Organization”.

1 (32) Despite Article 23(1) of the United Na-
2 tions Charter, Syria was elected on October 8, 2001,
3 to a 2-year term as a nonpermanent member of the
4 United Nations Security Council beginning January
5 1, 2002, and served as President of the Security
6 Council during June 2002 and August 2003.

7 (33) On March 31, 2003, the Syrian Foreign
8 Minister, Farouq al-Sharra, made the Syrian re-
9 gime’s intentions clear when he explicitly stated that
10 “Syria’s interest is to see the invaders defeated in
11 Iraq”.

12 (34) On April 13, 2003, Secretary of Defense
13 Donald Rumsfeld charged that “busloads” of Syrian
14 fighters entered Iraq with “hundreds of thousands
15 of dollars” and leaflets offering rewards for dead
16 American soldiers.

17 (35) On September 16, 2003, the Undersecre-
18 tary of State for Arms Control and International Se-
19 curity, John Bolton, appeared before the Sub-
20 committee on the Middle East and Central Asia of
21 the Committee on International Relations of the
22 House of Representatives, and underscored Syria’s
23 “hostile actions” toward coalition forces during Op-
24 eration Iraqi Freedom. Undersecretary Bolton added
25 that: “Syria allowed military equipment to flow into

1 Iraq on the eve of and during the war. Syria per-
2 mitted volunteers to pass into Iraq to attack and kill
3 our service members during the war, and is still
4 doing so . . . [Syria’s] behavior during Operation
5 Iraqi Freedom underscores the importance of taking
6 seriously reports and information on Syria’s WMD
7 capabilities.”.

8 (36) During his appearance before the Com-
9 mittee on International Relations of the House of
10 Representatives on September 25, 2003, Amba-
11 sador L. Paul Bremer, III, Presidential Envoy to
12 Iraq, stated that out of the 278 third-country na-
13 tionals who were captured by coalition forces in
14 Iraq, the “single largest group are Syrians”.

15 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

16 It is the sense of Congress that—

17 (1) the Government of Syria should imme-
18 diately and unconditionally halt support for ter-
19 rorism, permanently and openly declare its total re-
20 nunciation of all forms of terrorism, and close all
21 terrorist offices and facilities in Syria, including the
22 offices of Hamas, Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic
23 Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Pal-
24 estine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of
25 Palestine—General Command;

1 (2) the Government of Syria should—

2 (A) immediately and unconditionally stop
3 facilitating transit from Syria to Iraq of individ-
4 uals, military equipment, and other lethal items,
5 except as authorized by the Coalition Provi-
6 sional Authority or a representative, inter-
7 nationally recognized Iraqi government;

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

11 (C) undertake concrete, verifiable steps to
12 deter such behavior and control the use of terri-
13 tory under Syrian control;

14 (3) the Government of Syria should imme-
15 diately declare its commitment to completely with-
16 draw its armed forces, including military, para-
17 military, and security forces, from Lebanon, and set
18 a firm timetable for such withdrawal;

19 (4) the Government of Lebanon should deploy
20 the Lebanese armed forces to all areas of Lebanon,
21 including South Lebanon, in accordance with United
22 Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (September
23 17, 1982), in order to assert the sovereignty of the
24 Lebanese state over all of its territory, and should
25 evict all terrorist and foreign forces from southern

1 Lebanon, including Hizballah and the Iranian Revo-
2 lutionary Guards;

3 (5) the Government of Syria should halt the de-
4 velopment and deployment of medium- and long-
5 range surface-to-surface missiles and cease the de-
6 velopment and production of biological and chemical
7 weapons;

8 (6) the Governments of Lebanon and Syria
9 should enter into serious unconditional bilateral ne-
10 gotiations with the Government of Israel in order to
11 realize a full and permanent peace;

12 (7) the United States should continue to pro-
13 vide humanitarian and educational assistance to the
14 people of Lebanon only through appropriate private,
15 nongovernmental organizations and appropriate
16 international organizations, until such time as the
17 Government of Lebanon asserts sovereignty and con-
18 trol over all of its territory and borders and achieves
19 full political independence, as called for in United
20 Nations Security Council Resolution 520; and

21 (8) as a violator of several key United Nations
22 Security Council resolutions and pursuing policies
23 which undermine international peace and security,
24 Syria should not have been permitted to join the
25 United Nations Security Council or serve as the Se-

1 security Council's President, and should be removed
2 from the Security Council.

3 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

4 It is the policy of the United States that—

5 (1) Syria will be held responsible for attacks
6 committed by Hizballah and other terrorist groups
7 with offices, training camps, or other facilities in
8 Syria, or bases in areas of Lebanon occupied by
9 Syria;

10 (2) the United States shall impede Syria's abil-
11 ity to support acts of international terrorism and ef-
12 forts to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruc-
13 tion;

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

22 (4) efforts against Hizballah will be expanded
23 given the recognition that Hizballah is equally or
24 more capable than al Qaeda;

1 (5) the full restoration of Lebanon's sov-
2 ereignty, political independence, and territorial in-
3 tegrity is in the national security interest of the
4 United States;

5 (6) Syria is in violation of United Nations Se-
6 curity Council Resolution 520 (September 17, 1982)
7 through its continued occupation of Lebanese terri-
8 tory and its encroachment upon its political inde-
9 pendence;

10 (7) Syria's obligation to withdraw from Leb-
11 anon is not conditioned upon progress in the Israeli-
12 Syrian or Israeli-Lebanese peace process but derives
13 from Syria's obligation under Security Council Reso-
14 lution 520;

15 (8) Syria's acquisition of weapons of mass de-
16 struction and ballistic missile programs threaten the
17 security of the Middle East and the national security
18 interests of the United States;

19 (9) Syria will be held accountable for any harm
20 to Coalition armed forces or to any United States
21 citizen in Iraq due to its facilitation of terrorist ac-
22 tivities and its shipments of military supplies to
23 Iraq; and

24 (10) the United States will not provide any as-
25 sistance to Syria and will oppose multilateral assist-

1 ance for Syria until Syria ends all support for ter-
2 rorism, withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon,
3 and halts the development and deployment of weap-
4 ons of mass destruction and medium and long range
5 surface to surface ballistic missiles.

6 **SEC. 5. PENALTIES AND AUTHORIZATION.**

7 (a) PENALTIES.—Until the President makes the de-
8 termination that Syria meets all the requirements de-
9 scribed in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (d)
10 and certifies such determination to Congress in accord-
11 ance with such subsection—

12 (1) the President shall prohibit the export to
13 Syria of any item, including the issuance of a license
14 for the export of any item, on the United States Mu-
15 nitions List or Commerce Control List of dual-use
16 items in the Export Administration Regulations (15
17 C.F.R. part 730 et seq.); and

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

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

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

1 (C) Restrict Syrian diplomats in Wash-
2 ington, D.C., and at the United Nations in New
3 York City, to travel only within a 25-mile ra-
4 dius of Washington, D.C., or the United Na-
5 tions headquarters building, respectively.

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

9 (E) Reduce United States diplomatic con-
10 tacts with Syria (other than those contacts re-
11 quired to protect United States interests or
12 carry out the purposes of this Act).

13 (F) Block transactions in any property in
14 which the Government of Syria has any inter-
15 est, by any person, or with respect to any prop-
16 erty, subject to the jurisdiction of the United
17 States.

18 (b) WAIVER.—The President may waive the applica-
19 tion of paragraph (2) of subsection (a) for one or more
20 6-month periods if the President determines that it is in
21 the vital national security interest of the United States
22 to do so and transmits to Congress a report that contains
23 the reasons therefor.

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

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

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

11 (3) determines that the Government of Syria is
12 strictly respecting the sovereignty, territorial integ-
13 rity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon
14 under the sole and exclusive authority of the Govern-
15 ment of Lebanon through the Lebanese army
16 throughout Lebanon, as required under paragraph
17 (4) of United Nations Security Council Resolution
18 520 (1982),

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

22 (d) CERTIFICATION.—A certification under this sub-
23 section is a certification transmitted to the appropriate
24 congressional committees of a determination made by the
25 President that—

1 (1) the Government of Syria has ceased pro-
2 viding support for international terrorist groups and
3 does not allow terrorist groups, such as Hamas,
4 Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular
5 Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Pop-
6 ular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General
7 Command to maintain facilities in territory under
8 Syrian control;

9 (2) the Government of Syria has withdrawn all
10 Syrian military, intelligence, and other security per-
11 sonnel from Lebanon;

12 (3) the Government of Syria has ceased the de-
13 velopment and deployment of medium- and long-
14 range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles, is not pur-
15 suing or engaged in the research, development, ac-
16 quisition, production, transfer, or deployment of bio-
17 logical, chemical, or nuclear weapons, has provided
18 credible assurances that such behavior will not be
19 undertaken in the future, and has agreed to allow
20 United Nations and other international observers to
21 verify such actions and assurances; and

22 (4) the Government of Syria has ceased all sup-
23 port for, and facilitation of, all terrorist activities in-
24 side of Iraq, including preventing the use of territory
25 under its control by any means whatsoever to sup-

1 port those engaged in terrorist activities inside of
2 Iraq.

3 **SEC. 6. REPORT.**

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

10 (1) Syria’s progress toward meeting the condi-
11 tions described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of sec-
12 tion 5(d);

13 (2) connections, if any, between individual ter-
14 rorists and terrorist groups which maintain offices,
15 training camps, or other facilities on Syrian terri-
16 tory, or operate in areas of Lebanon occupied by the
17 Syrian armed forces, and the attacks against the
18 United States that occurred on September 11, 2001,
19 and other terrorist attacks on the United States or
20 its citizens, installations, or allies; and

21 (3) how the United States is increasing its ef-
22 forts against Hizballah given the recognition that
23 Hizballah is equally or more capable than al Qaeda.

1 (b) FORM.—The report submitted under subsection
2 (a) shall be in unclassified form but may include a classi-
3 fied annex.

4 **SEC. 7. DEFINITION OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL**
5 **COMMITTEES.**

6 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional com-
7 mittees” means the Committee on International Relations
8 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
9 Foreign Relations of the Senate.

10

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill 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.”

Chairman HYDE. The Chair recognizes Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen to explain the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. All of the Members have a copy of the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Briefly, this amendment merely updates the bill to reflect the current developments in Iraq, most importantly the end of the brutal Hussein regime and its threatening, destructive policy.

As my good friend and colleague, Mr. Engel, has stated, since the drafting and filing of the bill, Syria's behavior has deteriorated. This amendment adds paragraphs to the findings, to the sense of Congress and to the statement of policy reflecting the threats posed by the Syrian regime's support for and facilitation of all terrorist activities inside of Iraq, particularly attacks on our coalition forces.

It strikes provisions relating to the United Nations Security Council resolutions that pertain to the former Iraqi regime that is no longer there, while modifying clauses that detail the ongoing relationship between the Syrian regime and Saddam Hussein's regime, a relationship which provided an onslaught of financial benefits to both pariah states and a relationship which reportedly extended to cooperation into other more ominous issues.

The amendment further modifies the certification requirements by striking the paragraph relating to Syria's compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions. The purpose of this change is to ensure that U.S. foreign policy is not dictated by nor contingent upon United Nations' action, or rather, inaction.

The amendment makes the bill prospective by modifying the certification requirement concerning weapons of mass destruction to include research, development, acquisition, production, transfer or deployment of biological chemical or nuclear weapons.

Through this amendment, Mr. Chairman and Members, we are ensuring that if Syria engages in any of these activities after passage of this act, sanctions will be maintained unless or until the President certifies that Syria has ceased such behavior, has provided credible assurances that such behavior will not be undertaken in the future, and has agreed to allow on-site verification to confirm such action and assurances.

The amendment modifies the authorization of assistance by striking the reference to Lebanon, so that there is no question that Lebanon can continue receiving United States assistance as authorized by other laws.

I have worked on this amendment with Mr. Engel, who is the lead sponsor of the bill, with Chairman Hyde, with our Ranking Member, Mr. Lantos. We are engaged in consultation with the leadership, as well as with the Senate co-sponsors, and they are also supportive of this amendment.

I ask the Members to vote in favor of this amendment. It merely updates the egregious behavior of the Syrian regime.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman, for purposes of an amendment.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I have an amendment at the desk, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. The clerk will designate the amendment.

Ms. RUSH. Amendment offered by Mr. Ackerman. Page 13, Line 20—

Chairman HYDE. Without objection, further reading of the amendment is dispensed with.

[The amendment to H.R. 1828, offered by Mr. Ackerman, follows:]

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1828
OFFERED BY MR. ACKERMAN

Page 13, line 20, strike “and”.

Page 14, line 2, strike the period and insert “; and”.

Page 14, after line 2, add the following new paragraph:

1 (9) the President should withhold the nomina-
2 tion of any United States Ambassador to Syria, and
3 refuse to accept the credentials of any proposed Am-
4 bassador from the Government of Syria to the
5 United States, until the Government of Syria meets
6 all the requirements described in paragraphs (1)
7 through (4) of section 5(d) of this Act.

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My amendment simply adds an additional sense of Congress provision that the President should not nominate an Ambassador to Syria, nor accept the credentials of any proposed Ambassador to the United States appointed by the Governor of Syria, until such time as Syria permanently breaks its ties with terrorism, ceases its pursuit of materials and technology for weapons of mass destruction, ends its opposition to the United States and coalition reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon.

Mr. Chairman, before the Committee today the bill is basically about tightening sanctions on Syria because of the wide range of Syrian policies that are hostile to the United States and our interest in the Middle East; but, in reality, the bill is about sending a message to Syria that the time for your double dealing is over, that you no longer get a pass for nominal help on al-Qaeda while you continue to arm and support Palestinian terrorists, that we will no longer look the other way while you acquire weapons of mass destruction.

What better way, Mr. Chairman, to tell the Syrians that business as usual is over than by withholding our Ambassador and refusing to accept theirs? Diplomatic contact at the highest levels ought to be reserved for those states that actually follow the norms of reasonable state behavior.

The Syrian Government has made it painfully obvious that they are not interested in the normal discourse of civilized nations. We should take them up on their offer. The case against Syria is manifold. During combat operations in Iraq, there was credible evidence of arms and people moving from Syria into Iraq. Today there is no question that Syria is directly responsible for providing safe passage and transit documentation to many of the terrorists now seeking to undermine our relief and reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

Syrian cooperation in battling al-Qaeda has also waned dramatically. In the words of Ambassador-at-Large J. Cofer Black, the State Department's counterterrorism coordinator:

“We clearly do not have the full support of the Syrian Government on the al-Qaeda problem. They have allowed al-Qaeda personnel to come in and virtually settle in Syria with their knowledge and support.”

Moreover, for decades Damascus is continuing its active opposition to United States efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through its ongoing aid and support for Hizballah. That organization, of course, is continually seeking to increase its presence in the West Bank and Gaza in order to facilitate and support ever greater levels of Palestinian terrorism against Israel.

Damascus is also recently reported to have again supplemented Hizballah's arsenal with weapons from Syria's own depots, filling in for the Iranian weapons that can no longer transit through Iraqi air space. There is no question that the recent escalation of tensions on Israel's northern border could not have taken place without Syria's approval.

On July 22, President Bush said:

“Syria continues to harbor and assist terrorists. This behavior is completely unacceptable, and states that support terror will be held accountable.”

To date, we have done nothing to hold them accountable, and subsequently there has been no positive change in Syria’s behavior, nor has there been any indication at all that Damascus is prepared to change its offensive policies.

I fail to understand why there has been no action on the part of the Administration to date. The Baathist regime in Damascus has made it indisputably clear that they will not be an ally in the war on terrorism and that they are, in fact, deeply committed to supporting, sponsoring, facilitating, and underwriting international terrorism directed against the United States, Israel and Iraq.

Syria continues to illegally occupy Lebanon and is an active threat to peace in the Middle East and to vital United States security interests. Damascus has been given every opportunity for rapprochement, and it is now clear that these chances were wasted on the Asad dictatorship. There is nothing left to say to a regime that repeatedly chooses to support terror.

As President Bush told Congress and the American people only days after September 11, every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists, said the President. Syria is clearly with the terrorists.

Now it is time for our Administration to match its bold words with action. By coincidence, both the United States and Syria are in between ambassadorial appointments. Both countries are currently represented by a chargé d’affaires. My amendment simply calls upon the Administration to maintain this status quo.

Mr. Chairman, should the President choose, and it will be his choice under this measure, to impose the economic sanctions under the bill before us today, they will make only a modest difference in the current state in our relations with Syria, but withholding our Ambassador will make it crystal clear to Syria that business as usual is over.

I urge all of our colleagues to support this amendment.

Chairman HYDE. The Chair recognizes himself for 5 minutes.

I appreciate the spirit in which the amendment is offered by Mr. Ackerman. It is certainly well intentioned, and it is in keeping with the spirit of the entire legislation. I just think it is depriving the Administration, the State Department, the people who would actively negotiate with Syria, of a tool. It is limiting their flexibility by denying the right to the President to nominate an Ambassador.

In the Middle East, you get things done through personal contact, and the only way to reach past the bureaucracy in Syria is through an Ambassador. I do not see how peace is attainable if you do not talk to people.

I will never forget Andy Young when he was our Ambassador to the U.N., and he got caught talking to a Palestinian and lost his job. I thought removing him was a big mistake back then because you are not going to reach peace if you cannot talk to people, understand each other.

Telling the President he should not nominate anybody to be an Ambassador to Syria, without being able to talk, cutting off all official contact, it seems to me is limiting us. Despite Syria’s bleak

record as far as human rights and supporting freedom and democracy, at least we have the ability to talk, and it is in talking, whether on the record or off the record, that progress can be made.

This legislation sends a very strong message, the fact that we are marking it up today, and the sanctions that are in the legislation are severe enough, and I think that this is short of totally breaking any relationship with an important country in the Middle East.

I am not ready to give up. I am trying to negotiate some decency over there, and so I would respectfully suggest we do not support this well-intentioned amendment.

The Chair recognizes—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Would the distinguished Chairman yield?

Chairman HYDE. Surely.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just several brief points.

Almost the entire measure before us is advisory. They are all sense of the Congress resolutions basically. The President can waive everything in the entire bill before us, with the exception of the dual use sanctions, which is one small paragraph of the entire legislation. It is about sending a message.

Secondly, my amendment does not cut off all contact. It maintains the status quo that we currently have at the chargé d'affaires level. I for one agree with the Chairman. We should try to keep talking to everybody, but there are some people that we really do not talk to at the ambassadorial level.

I do not think that the Chairman, in his eloquent remarks, is suggesting that we have an Ambassador to North Korea, because we do not; or an Ambassador to Burma, because we do not; or an Ambassador to Iran, because we do not; or an Ambassador to Cuba, because we do not.

Chairman HYDE. Would the gentleman give back my time for a comment?

Mr. ACKERMAN. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. I think we should be talking to all those countries, and I think it is a mistake if we do not.

Whether you call them Ambassadors or whatever you want to call them, I would not oppose Ambassadors talking at the highest levels where peace is the issue, but that is an idiosyncratic view of mine, and I will carry it to my grave.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Idiosyncratic you are not, Mr. Chairman. The President has that right, and as with almost everything within this bill, he can basically waive it. I would fully expect him to waive it possibly.

This is about sending a message. Everything else in the bill is about sending a message. The President can waive almost every single thing in the bill. This is not about cutting off dialogue. The chargé d'affaires is always referred to anyway as Ambassador nonetheless, but it is the message that we would be sending. The dialogue is important, and nobody is suggesting that end.

Chairman HYDE. I do not want to involve Mr. Lantos beyond any borderline that he wanted to be involved, but he just visited the President of Syria, and I gather if you are a congressman you can probably get through. At least today you can, but below that an Ambassador could not, as the official representative of the country

and of the President. When you get down to the level of chargé, I do not think you have the access.

Mr. ACKERMAN. That is what we have now, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Yes, but we are proposing an Ambassador.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I do not believe we have proposed any Ambassador yet.

Chairman HYDE. There is a name, I am told.

Mr. ACKERMAN. It is not Mr. Lantos, I hope, although he would be excellent.

Chairman HYDE. I would sleep easily if it were he. In any event, thank you.

Mr. Leach.

Mr. LEACH. I will be very brief, Mr. Chairman. I want to say I think your observations are extremely thoughtful.

It is self-evident that when you have the most concerns with a country, you want to have the most available means of communication in the most professional way.

I do not think when you talk about messages, Mr. Ackerman, that you want to send a message that the United States Congress does not want to have communication with a country of great difficulty. I think it should be the reverse message.

I would also note a statement of the President because he has been quoted here very widely. He has said to the Government of Israel that he hoped this situation would not escalate. I think the Congress should hope the same thing. To escalate to the point that we say we do not want to have a United States Ambassador, I think, would be inappropriate.

There are aspects of this resolution that are awfully stern, and to then indicate that communications will be more difficult, and the ability to seek reconciliation harder, I think is not a message that Congress wants to send.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEACH. Of course.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank the gentleman for his exceptional thoughtful observations, which I agree with in very strong measure.

The gentleman and I had a briefing by the CIA this morning at code level about North Korea. Nobody is suggesting that we, in order to maintain the dialogue, have an Ambassador going to North Korea. I mean, we do not even have a chargé in North Korea. They are just as important, and I do not think anybody would argue that they are less dangerous than is Syria, and yet that is the normal thing that we do.

Syria is the only country on the list of terrorist states and it has been there since the initiation of the list, as Mr. Engel so aptly pointed out in his comments, where we have a real full ambassadorial level exchange. We do not have Ambassadors to the other terrorist states.

If they are on the list, there is a message. The message we send by not even including them in this, which is waivable, as is the rest of the bill. I feel everything in there is rather punitive on the Syrians. You know, should we do that? Does it send the wrong message?

It is time we sent the strong message. This is a strong message and, like all of the other messages, I would expect the President, if he feels it is in the security interest of the United States, will waive it. That is within his prerogative.

Mr. LEACH. If I could recapture my time? We want to proceed with this bill, but I want to be very careful about this.

Sometimes we withdraw Ambassadors for the security of the mission, and that is a very appropriate circumstance. That is one of the issues why we do not have an Ambassador in Iran.

The Chairman of the Committee, because you said no money supports Ambassadors to certain countries, indicated he did. I would be closer to sharing his perspective on that than others.

I do not think it is mandatory that the United States always have an Ambassador to every country, but I think it is generally helpful, and it is particularly helpful the more disagreement we have. The deeper the disagreement, the more important it is that we have appropriate diplomatic contact.

Chairman HYDE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEACH. Of course.

Chairman HYDE. In other words, the bill is giving the President another card to play. It is giving him some flexibility in negotiating when you can or cannot send an Ambassador or pull an Ambassador, but the amendment is taking that out of the arsenal.

Mr. ACKERMAN. No. No, we are not.

Mr. LEACH. As usual, the Chairman says things better and more wisely than most of us.

Mr. ACKERMAN. May I ask for an additional moment?

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman, Mr. Ackerman, is recognized for 2 minutes without objection.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes. We are not removing any arrows from the quiver of the President. Certainly it is within his prerogative to fail to appoint an Ambassador if he so chooses. That is constitutional prerogative.

We are not, as Mr. Leach indicated, denying the President that opportunity. We are suggesting that this be on the list of things that he consider not doing. He can do all of the things that are in this rather substantial piece of legislation that is before us. Everything in here is waivable by the President. Everything in here is within the President's prerogative, as is the appointment of an Ambassador.

We are not taking that away. We are saying it should be included on the list to get the attention of the Syrians that we can do an additional thing if the President so deems it. We are not removing any negotiating tools. I think we should keep talking to the Syrians. If we keep talking and doing nothing else, my eventual view is that the nuance is, and they read that very well in the Middle East, talk is cheap.

We finally have to take an action. That would be the least offensive I think of the actions that are all waivable within this legislation, and certainly the President still maintains his prerogative to appoint the Ambassador.

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman from California, Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First I want to compliment Elliot Engel and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for putting forward this bill. It is long overdue. I would like to speak with great eloquence about the importance of the bill, but that has already been done by the sponsor and co-sponsor.

Second, Mr. Chairman, I would like to put in a plug for having a markup of the Iran Democracy and Freedom Support Act, because every crime we have talked about from Syria is also being committed by the government in Tehran, plus, and this is a big plus, they are developing nuclear weapons. That bill has bipartisan co-sponsors numbering a couple of dozen at this point, and I hope that we can have a markup of that bill.

As to the amendment, I would simply say this is a sense of Congress. We are not tying anybody's hands. This is less binding than a motion to instruct, and certainly it strengthens this bill to put Congress on record that the President ought to take a look at not having that seal of approval for the government in Damascus that comes with having an Ambassador.

Now, given how negotiations on the most important matters usually take place, they take place at the foreign minister level. They take place at the United Nations where we have a cabinet level Ambassador.

There are many ways we can talk to Syria. Having, though, someone called an Ambassador rather than a chargé is a way of saying that this is a government that we fully recognize as a legitimate member of the family of governments, and I think that is the wrong signal to send. The best signal is for Congress to say that we urge the President to take this action.

I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Paul.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak against the amendment, but also about the bill in general.

I certainly agree with the Chairman's comments on the need to allow the President to have the ability to appoint an Ambassador, and I think he made some very, very good points. I also think that all the points that he made also apply to the bill and actually are the reasons why I oppose the bill—because I think we are going in the opposite direction.

I see that some people see this as just one step too far, and I agree, and I will vote against the amendment. I would hope that we reconsider the whole piece of legislation, because this looks like it is *deja vu* all over again. It looks like we are just taking on another problem for ourselves.

We have nation building going on in Afghanistan, which now is the opium capital of the world once again. We are in Iraq begging and pleading for others to come in and help us and fund it. It is a great burden to the American taxpayer. At the same time now we are in many ways threatening the Syrians to do exactly as we say or else, and I just do not think that is a good way to get along.

Now, it is not that the Syrians are an ideal nation, but I understand they were helpful to the United States. As a matter of fact, just yesterday on AP Service it said Syria claims, and this is supported by United States intelligence, that Damascus has provided the United States with valuable assistance in countering terrorism.

The Syrians have in custody Mohammed Zamar, believed to have been the recruiter for the hijackers, and quite a few people that they have had on a list have ended up in U.S. custody. So it is not like it is all black and white that they have not been helpful at all.

I do question No. 8 under the statement of policy as being something that may be absolutely true, but you are going to have trouble convincing the people of this country. It says Syria's acquisition of weapons of mass destruction poses a threat to the national security interest of the United States.

I mean, here we go. Do they really have them? Who is going to believe it? Are they really a threat to the security of the United States? There is a little bit of credibility there that does not really exist, and it just looks like we are looking for more trouble.

Now, all these groups are bad groups, but not one of those groups have in the last 20 years directed any attack toward the United States, so I see this as a dangerous move. I see this as inviting trouble; that these groups who have not targeted the United States—these are not the al-Qaeda. These are other groups. We are literally saying to them we are going to come and get you, and maybe then the United States and U.S. interests around the world will become the direct target.

I just do not see how we can take on another nation, another nation which will probably end up in nation building just before we go into Iran. When will it ever end? In other words, this confirms some of the deepest suspicions of the Arab Muslim world. They suspect us for what our motives are and our intentions are, and they see this as a Jihad. Here we are going into another country, another Muslim country, and I do not see how it will serve our interest.

Like the Chairman pointed out, you go too far if you do not even have a dialogue. I would say this is getting awfully close to closing the dialogue with Syria. The sanctions, you know, are just one more affront to our relationship with them.

I know the motivations are very good, and I know there are a lot of people over there, but in our self interest I think we ought not to pass this legislation and that we certainly should oppose the amendment dealing with the Ambassador.

Mr. SHERMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PAUL. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. SHERMAN. You say that the Syrians have not caused the death of our service people since 20 years ago in 1983, but it is with the complicity of the Syrian Government that Syrian "volunteers" and other militants from the Arab world have gone through Syria—

Mr. PAUL. I would like to reclaim my time.

Mr. SHERMAN [continuing]. And are killing our people in Iraq.

Mr. PAUL. Well, that may or may not be true, but to assume that the Syrian Government has absolute control of those borders is like assuming Pakistan has absolute control of their borders. They are our allies, and Osama bin Laden is probably in Pakistan, so I do not think that argument holds up.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Hoeffel.

Mr. HOFFEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I support the Ackerman amendment. I support the Ros-Lehtinen substitute. I support the Engel underlying bill, which I co-sponsored.

Clearly, we have to tell Syria that it is completely unacceptable to be a state sponsor of terror. We need to take the strongest possible diplomatic action to register our opposition. It is long overdue.

I would say to our Chairman, with all respect, I do not believe that we will achieve peace in the Middle East through the work of our Ambassadors. I do not think that is enough. The recent Israeli military strike in Syria is understandable. I agree with President Bush that we would do the same if we were in that similar position.

It is a very legitimate question to ask how much more terror can Israel take without a massive military response, but I think we also have to face the reality that violence will not achieve peace in the Middle East.

There is obviously no moral equivalency between the horrible violence of terror against innocent civilians that Israel faces and the understandable military self-defense that Israel must take. I view this strike into Syria as an understandable and supportable military effort at self-defense, but it is not going to bring peace.

While there is no moral equivalency between the terror against Israel and her self-defense, I think it is necessary for this Committee and Congress to understand that violence will not bring peace in the Middle East, nor will the work of our Ambassadors, which is why I think the Ackerman amendment is an important symbolic step to take.

We need the President to become directly and personally and enthusiastically involved in the peace process in the Middle East. We need a passionate diplomacy from the White House. That is the only thing that is going to get the peace process back on track. We have not seen that enthusiastic and personal and direct involvement of the President. We need that passion from him, and I hope we will get it. He wants peace as much as all of us do in the Middle East. That is not the issue.

The question is what will bring us back to the peace process? The Syria Accountability Act will help as a symbolic gesture. The Ackerman amendment should be part of it as a symbolic gesture. Our Ambassadors cannot get us, Mr. Chairman, to the peace table, I do not believe. I believe the President must, with our support of the President, which I certainly pledge.

I yield back my time.

Chairman HYDE. I would tell my friend that I have known some passionate Ambassadors.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. It is pretty hard to have passion if you have the office vacant, but nonetheless I would like to move along.

We have a recording quorum, so to close debate if you will agree—let us recognize Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I ask my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

I approach this amendment perhaps from a different perspective from some who have spoken because I strongly believe that diplomacy with Syria has indeed failed. That is why we are here today

going to pass a bill that seeks to impose sanctions that is adding teeth to our policy efforts.

The bill sends the strongest possible message. That is why the Syrian Embassy is asking its supporters to lobby against the bill. An additional sense of the Congress statement as proposed by my wonderful friend and Ranking Member, Mr. Ackerman, does not in any way strengthen the underlying bill.

While I support any step which further pressures the Syrian regime, I must oppose this amendment because it does not offer any substantive change or add any policy value to the bill. It may actually be superfluous in the sense that the penalty sections of the underlying bill already provide the President with diplomatic sanctions against the Syrian regime.

The main difference between Mr. Ackerman's well-meaning amendment and the bill before us is that this amendment places the Congress in a position to essentially dictate to the President how to implement the range of sanctions which the bill has. The bill offers the President this cafeteria menu style sanctions.

This is a critical distinction. The bill before us ensures that the President has the discretion to maintain those contacts required to protect U.S. interests or to carry out the purpose of the bill. If that means that the Ambassadors must stay while other diplomatic contacts are halted, then it is a matter of national security.

I do not think we should deny that flexibility to the President. That flexibility is already there in the bill. We do not need to further tie his hands, and I ask my colleagues to vote no on this well-meaning but already covered and already provided for amendment in the underlying bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. If there is no further discussion, and I hope there is not—

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman HYDE. I am wrong, I guess.

Mr. ENGEL. I will be very brief.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I rise in support of the Ackerman amendment. I will not go over all the reasons, but I think that not sending an Ambassador to Damascus again sends another signal. This bill is important in that it sends signals to tell the Syrians that we are angry, and we are not going to tolerate their bad behavior.

If we do not send an Ambassador, we can certainly have other people not at the ambassadorial level to negotiate and talk to the Syrians if that needs to be the case. I look at the Ackerman amendment as something which enhances the bill, not something which pulls away from it, and I urge my colleagues to support the Ackerman amendment.

Chairman HYDE. The question occurs on the Ackerman amendment, and Ms. Rush will call the roll.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Leach?

Mr. LEACH. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Leach votes no.

Mr. Bereuter?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Burton?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Gallegly?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen?
Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No.
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen votes no.
Mr. Ballenger?
Mr. BALLENGER. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Ballenger votes no.
Mr. Rohrabacher?
Mr. ROHRABACHER. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Rohrabacher votes no.
Mr. Royce?
Mr. ROYCE. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Royce votes no.
Mr. King?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Chabot?
Mr. CHABOT. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Chabot votes no.
Mr. Houghton?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. McHugh?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Tancredo?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Paul?
Mr. PAUL. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Paul votes no.
Mr. Smith of Michigan?
Mr. SMITH OF MICHIGAN. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Michigan votes no.
Mr. Pitts?
Mr. PITTS. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Pitts votes no.
Mr. Flake?
Mr. FLAKE. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Flake votes no.
Mrs. Davis?
Mrs. DAVIS. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mrs. Davis votes no.
Mr. Green?
Mr. GREEN. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Green votes no.
Mr. Weller?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Pence?
Mr. PENCE. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Pence votes no.
Mr. McCotter?
Mr. MCCOTTER. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. McCotter votes no.
Mr. Janklow?
Mr. JANKLOW. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Janklow votes no.
Ms. Harris?
Ms. HARRIS. No.
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Harris votes no.
Mr. Lantos?
Mr. LANTOS. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Lantos votes yes.
Mr. Berman?
Mr. BERMAN. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Berman votes no.
Mr. Ackerman?
Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Ackerman votes yes.
Mr. Faleomavaega?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Payne?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Menendez?
Mr. MENENDEZ. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Menendez votes yes.
Mr. Brown?
Mr. BROWN. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Brown votes yes.
Mr. Sherman?
Mr. SHERMAN. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Sherman votes yes.
Mr. Wexler?
Mr. WEXLER. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Wexler votes yes.
Mr. Engel?
Mr. ENGEL. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Engel votes yes.
Mr. Delahunt?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Meeks?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Lee?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Crowley?
Mr. CROWLEY. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Crowley votes yes.
Mr. Hoeffel?
Mr. HOEFFEL. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Hoeffel votes yes.
Mr. Blumenauer?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Berkley?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Napolitano?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Schiff?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Ms. Watson?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Washington?

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Washington votes no.

Ms. McCollum?

Ms. MCCOLLUM. No.

Ms. RUSH. Ms. McCollum votes no,

Mr. Bell?

Mr. BELL. Yes.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Bell votes yes.

Chairman Hyde?

Chairman HYDE. No.

Ms. RUSH. Chairman Hyde votes no.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Burton of Indiana?

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Chairman, how am I recorded?

Ms. RUSH. He is not recorded.

Mr. BURTON. Then I vote no.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Burton votes no.

Chairman HYDE. Have all voted who wish? If so, the clerk will announce the vote.

Mr. Tancredo of Colorado?

Mr. TANCREDO. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Tancredo votes no.

Chairman HYDE. The clerk will—

Ms. RUSH. On this vote there are 10 ayes and 22 nays.

Chairman HYDE. The amendment is not agreed to.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Wexler for purposes of an amendment.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have an amendment at the desk which simply places the Government of Syria on notice that they must immediately halt all espionage activities and operations at our military bases in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Chairman HYDE. The clerk will designate the amendment.

Ms. RUSH. Amendment offered by Mr. Wexler. Page 13, Line 19—

Chairman HYDE. Without objection, further reading of the amendment is dispensed with.

[The amendment to H.R. 1828, offered by Mr. Wexler, follows:]

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1828
OFFERED BY MR. WEXLER

Page 13, line 19, strike “and”.

Page 14, line 2, strike the period and insert “; and”.

Page 14, after line 2, add the following new paragraph:

1 (9) the Government of Syria should immediately halt all espionage activities and operations on
2 United States military installations and personnel
3 and prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, which is
4 a direct threat to the national security interests of
5 the United States.
6

Page 15, line 25, strike “and”.

Page 16, line 8, strike the period and insert “; and”.

Page 16, after line 8, add the following new paragraph:

7 (12) Syria should be held accountable for any
8 harm to the national security interests of the United
9 States and the war on terrorism caused by Syrian
10 spies who are under suspicion of espionage at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
11

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The amendment holds the Syrian Government accountable for any harm to America's national security as a result of the espionage or alleged espionage activities in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The Committee is well aware that there is a current Pentagon investigation into several American interpreters and clergy at the military prison in Cuba—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chair, I cannot hear the author of the amendment.

Mr. WEXLER [continuing]. Who are under suspicion of espionage. I am deeply disturbed by press reports suggesting Syria may be linked to this spy network.

According to the Washington Post and Associated Press, military authority has alleged that a senior airman attempted to deliver sensitive information to Syria, including more than 180 notes from prisoners, a map of the installation, the movement of military aircraft to and from the base, intelligence documents and the names and cell block numbers of captives at the prison in Cuba.

As of today, there are 10 people who worked at the camp under suspicion in this probe. Each of us is deeply concerned about the discovery that individuals alleged to be spies to the Syrian Government may have infiltrated Guantanamo Bay posing as military translators and clergy, sabotaging interviews with al-Qaeda terrorists, compromising the security of the facility and transmitting classified information to Syria.

It is imperative that the Bush Administration take every step necessary to investigate this disastrous situation and to punish those individuals and nations who may have seriously damaged our national interest.

Mr. Chairman, if these reports prove accurate and Syria is in fact implicated in these acts of espionage, it only strengthens the argument that President Asad's regime is a direct threat to the United States. We must hold the Syrian Government accountable for these actions, which may have grave implications for our intelligence operations, as well as for American-Syrian relations.

Syria's hostile actions must be dealt with with consequences. The time has come for President Asad to choose whether he wishes Syria to be viewed as a viable partner in the international community or remain a terrorist pariah state.

Four months ago, I traveled to Syria and met with President Asad. During our meeting, President Asad expressed his strong desire to improve his relationship with Washington and reinvigorate peace negotiations with Israel. I expressed in no uncertain terms that his efforts would be futile unless he responded to the visit of Secretary Powell to Syria in May with significant positive steps, including closing its border with Iraq, taking definitive action against Hizballah and Islamic Jihad and shutting down Palestinian terrorist offices in Damascus.

Mr. Chairman, President Asad's policies appear unchanged, and he has undeniably failed to meet Secretary Powell's demands. Just 2 weeks ago, Ambassador Bremer revealed that the largest group

of foreign nationals captured in Iraq have been Syrians, some of whom are guilty of targeting and killing American troops.

Events of the past week, including the discovery of a terrorist camp near Damascus and allegations of Syrian spies in the United States, only demonstrate President Asad's increased contempt for America and an insatiable propensity for feeding the flames of terrorism in the Middle East.

For too long, American policy has kowtowed to an undeserving Syrian regime as it played a duplicitous game of providing Washington with intelligence sometimes, while at the same time continuing its support for the infrastructure of global terror.

I hope that President Asad understands that no one in Washington is fooled anymore, and the time for soft-pedaling with Syria is over.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I urge support of the amendment.

Chairman HYDE. The gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and I thank Mr. Wexler for bringing up this very important issue, which not only has Syrian implications but, to an extent, to other individuals, groups, states who are classified as enemies of the United States.

For this reason, I have been working with Chairman Hyde on securing a classified Members briefing with Department of Defense officials, and, in keeping with our Committee's jurisdiction over intelligence activities related to foreign policy, I have formulated a series of questions to be answered at such a briefing by DOD, which due to the sensitive nature of this issue I will not discuss in this open forum.

I believe that this amendment, however, is premature, given that we have to gather more facts. This is an ongoing investigation on an intelligence issue. We all know that legislating on such issues without being fully briefed could potentially interfere with efforts by our agencies to determine the extent of the problem, to determine the parties involved, how the information was used, the impact of such espionage activities and a series of other critical issues.

To reiterate, I strongly believe that the proper course of action for us to follow is that which I have already initiated, which is to hold classified Member briefings with the appropriate officials, which will be forthcoming. I congratulate my colleague, Mr. Wexler, for highlighting an important piece of the puzzle. I would pose to my colleague, my good friend, Mr. Wexler, that we agree to proceed with such sessions so that we can put the puzzle together.

If he would consider withdrawing his amendment at this time, we will work together with him to put such briefings together.

Mr. WEXLER. If I could just defer to Mr. Menendez, and then I will respond to the Chairwoman, if that is okay with the Chairman?

Chairman HYDE. Does the gentlelady yield to Mr. Menendez?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes, absolutely.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Menendez.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I appreciate the gentlelady yielding. I am seeking my own time on the amendment.

Chairman HYDE. Very well. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized to strike the last word.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to support Mr. Wexler's amendment and his effort, and I want to take the opportunity of his amendment to also say that I agree totally with not only his effort in this regard, but with the sponsors and this legislation.

It is time for Syria to be held accountable for supporting terrorism. They must be held accountable for harboring terrorists in their own country, for supporting Hizballah in Lebanon and for allowing terrorists to use their border to attack our troops in Iraq. They will be held accountable for their acts of support of terrorist organizations carrying out suicide attacks on innocent Israeli citizens.

Syria harbors, Syria cradles, Syria provides a refuge, a home base, a safe haven for terrorists. Within their protectiveness in Syria, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, among others, train and plan for the attacks they carry out in Israel and, as Mr. Wexler points out, even their espionage.

Now, we all saw the results of that training and planning this past weekend. Last Saturday, right before the holiest day in the Jewish year, Islamic Jihad carried out one of the most violent attacks in recent history, when they killed 19 people, including three children, and wounded 50 more. This attack, killing both Arabs and Jews, was despicable, and I certainly extend my deepest sympathy to the family members of those who were killed and to all Israelis.

That is why I urge my colleagues to fully support this bill, and I personally fully support Israel's decision to bomb a terrorist training camp inside Syria. That attack sends a clear message that Israel cannot tolerate the incubation of terrorism by other states, just as we have not been able to accept that as well.

The United States also must use this opportunity to send a clear message to Syria. We must not tolerate the continued attacks on American soldiers in Iraq by fighters who cross into Iraq through Syria's border. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers, so-called volunteers, have used the Syrian border to rush in to help the Saddam regime prior to the war, and to this day fighters continue to cross the Syrian border into Iraq.

President Asad claims that Syria does not know who is crossing the border into Iraq. He also claims that Palestinian terrorist groups are merely "existing forces that you must deal with." These statements are ridiculous attempts to avoid responsibility for Syria's support of terrorism, and that is why we need to support this bill which holds Syria accountable.

It simply says that until Syria stops supporting terrorist organizations bent on the destruction of Israel, until Syria stops supporting Hizballah, Islamic Jihad and Hamas, until Syria pulls out of Lebanon, until Syria ceases its development of any weapons of mass destruction and until Syria cleans out its nest of terrorists that Syria will be sanctioned by the United States of America, period.

That is the message that we should be sending. It is a clear message not only to Syria, but to others similarly situated, and I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Wexler's amendment, as well as the underlying bill.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Wexler, I am told that if there is appropriate report language you are willing to withdraw your amendment. Is that so?

Mr. WEXLER. Yes, Mr. Chairman. The answer is yes, with the representations that the Chairwoman has made, which I respect very much, and her commitment to this bill, as I do Mr. Engel.

With the report language and with the hope that subsequent to the hearings that the Chairwoman speaks about that, if the facts warrant inclusion in the bill at a later date, that she and Mr. Engel would consider it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If the gentleman would yield?

Mr. WEXLER. Yes, of course.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Absolutely, and I very much agree with everything that you are trying to do with this very important amendment. I agree that it could be a real threat, and I will be glad to do that.

Mr. FLAKE. Will the gentleman yield to me?

Mr. WEXLER. Yes, of course.

Mr. FLAKE. Yes. First of all, I thank the gentleman for his very timely amendment, and I certainly support it, and I support the efforts of Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen as well, and I think that we have identified this issue. We have brought it up front, and I think now is the time to move on it.

I thank the gentleman for raising this very, very important issue. I think it gives a very well-rounded picture of the mischief that the Syrian regime has done in so many different aspects, and I yield back to the gentleman.

Chairman HYDE. Does the gentleman withdraw his amendment?

Mr. WEXLER. Yes.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you. The question occurs on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All in favor say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman HYDE. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

Chairman HYDE. The ayes have it.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Chairman, on that I respectfully request a rollcall.

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman requests a rollcall.

Mr. LANTOS. I withdraw my request.

Chairman HYDE. Okay. The ayes have it, and the question occurs now on the motion to report the bill, H.R. 1828, favorably as amended. The clerk will call the roll.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Leach?

Mr. LEACH. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Leach votes yes.

Mr. Bereuter?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of New Jersey?

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of New Jersey votes yes.
Mr. Burton?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Gallegly?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen?
Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen votes yes.
Mr. Ballenger?
Mr. BALENGER. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Ballenger votes yes.
Mr. Rohrabacher?
Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Rohrabacher votes yes.
Mr. Royce?
Mr. ROYCE. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Royce votes yes.
Mr. King?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Chabot?
Mr. CHABOT. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Chabot votes yes.
Mr. Houghton?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. McHugh?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Tancredo?
Mr. TANCREDO. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Tancredo votes yes.
Mr. Paul?
Mr. PAUL. No.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Paul votes no.
Mr. Smith of Michigan?
Mr. SMITH OF MICHIGAN. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Michigan votes Yes.
Mr. Pitts?
Mr. PITTS. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Pitts votes yes.
Mr. Flake?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mrs. Davis?
Mrs. DAVIS. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mrs. Davis votes Yes.
Mr. Green?
Mr. GREEN. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Green votes yes.
Mr. Weller?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Pence?
Mr. PENCE. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Pence votes yes.
Mr. McCotter?
Mr. McCOTTER. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. McCotter votes yes.

Mr. Janklow?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Harris?
Ms. HARRIS. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Harris votes yo.
Mr. Lantos?
Mr. LANTOS. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Lantos votes yes.
Mr. Berman?
Mr. BERMAN. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Berman votes yes.
Mr. Ackerman?
Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Ackerman votes yes.
Mr. Faleomavaega?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Payne?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Menendez?
Mr. MENENDEZ. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Menendez votes yes.
Mr. Brown?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Sherman?
Mr. SHERMAN. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Sherman votes yes.
Mr. Wexler?
Mr. WEXLER. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Wexler votes yes.
Mr. Engel?
Mr. ENGEL. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Engel votes yes.
Mr. Delahunt?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Meeks?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Lee?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Crowley?
Ms. CROWLEY. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Crowley votes yes.
Mr. Hoeffel?
Mr. HOEFFEL. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Hoeffel votes yes.
Mr. Blumenauer?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Berkley?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Ms. Napolitano?
[No response.]
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Schiff?
Mr. SCHIFF. Aye.
Ms. RUSH. Mr. Schiff votes yes.
Ms. Watson?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Washington?

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Washington votes yes.

Ms. McCollum?

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Ms. McCollum votes yes.

Mr. Bell?

Mr. BELL. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Bell votes yes.

Chairman Hyde?

Chairman HYDE. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Chairman Hyde votes yes.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Janklow?

Mr. JANKLOW. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Janklow votes yes.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Burton?

Mr. BURTON. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Burton votes yes.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Flake?

Mr. FLAKE. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Flake votes no.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. McHugh?

Mr. MCHUGH. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. McHugh votes yes.

Chairman HYDE. The clerk will report.

Ms. RUSH. On this vote there are 32 ayes and two nos.

Chairman HYDE. The ayes have it.

Is it too late to get Mr. Brown in? All right. Would you record him? There he is.

Did you announce your vote, Mr. Brown?

Mr. BROWN. I vote yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Brown votes yes.

Chairman HYDE. Now, what kind of a count do we have?

Ms. RUSH. On this vote there are 33 yeses and two nos.

Chairman HYDE. The ayes have it. The motion to report favorably is adopted.

Without objection, the Chairman is authorized to move to go to conference pursuant to House Rule 20, and without objection the staff is directed to make any technical and conforming changes. The Chair thanks everyone for their attendance.

The Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:04 p.m. the Committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. Chairman, I very much appreciate your bringing H.R. 1828, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, before the Committee today.

The Syria Accountability Act enjoys broad bipartisan support. At the present time, we have over 280 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, including the House Majority Leader Tom Delay, Majority Whip Roy Blunt, Minority Nancy Pelosi, and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer.

Threats posed by the Syrian regime, for years, have been of grave concern to Congress. Syria is a charter member of the state-sponsors of terrorism list. It reportedly condones al-Qaeda's use of Lebanon and supports and harbors Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the PFLP-GC, and Hamas, including providing basing privileges and camps.

Syrian-sponsored groups have perpetrated acts of terrorism against Americans, most notably, the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Syrian-occupied Lebanon in 1983, which killed 241 American Marines; as well as suicide bombings in Israel, which have claimed the lives of scores of innocent Israelis and American citizens.

Syria provided assistance to the terrorists who perpetrated the attack on the Khobar Towers in 1996, killing 19 American servicemen; and, recently in Iraq, despite repeated American warnings, there has been Syrian involvement in a series of attacks against Coalition forces.

Syria allowed military equipment to flow into Iraq prior to and during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Syria is still permitting these terrorists to pass into Iraq to attack and kill our service members. Most of these so-called "volunteers" or "irregulars" have been Syrian, and most of those who are not, have carried Syrian travel documents, in some cases specifically marked "reason for entry: Jihad. Length of stay: Indefinite."

In fact, Syria's Foreign Minister stated that "*Syria's interest is to see the invaders defeated in Iraq,*" adding that *resistance is extremely important*. Further, just two weeks ago, Ambassador Paul Bremer stated during his testimony before the Committee that, "The number of third country national detainees we have now is 278, of which 123 are from Syria. And we believe that there are rat lines, as they call them, from Syria into Iraq where both fighters and, in many cases, terrorists are still coming in."

In addition to the terrorist threat, Syria has increased and diversified its weapons of mass destruction programs to present a serious threat to our interests in the region—with the Syrian Defense Minister indicating in an April 2000 article the Syrian military's plan to *integrate biological weapons in its tactical and strategic arsenals*.

To address and evaluate Syria's support for terrorism, its weapons of mass destruction program, and its violations of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, which I chair, has held hearings and numerous open and classified briefings addressing these important issues.

The final assessment based on all of these discussions is that the time has come to hold Syria accountable for its actions. The Congress of the United States cannot allow Syria to continue activities that pose a direct threat to the safety of the United States and our allies.

The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act offers the Administration the right mechanism to press the Syrian regime to immediately halt

its destructive policies. This Act bans all military and dual-use exports to Syria and requires the imposition of two or more of the wide range of sanctions provided for in the bill. It includes a Presidential waiver on the latter sanctions, if it is vital to the national security of the United States.

It authorizes the provision of assistance to Syria only if the President certifies, among other requirements, that Syria is not providing support for international terrorists; has withdrawn all military, security, and intelligence personnel from Lebanon; and has ceased the development and deployment of ballistic missiles and has ceased its WMD programs.

The bill also has a requirement calling on the Secretary of State to report on progress made by Syria on withdrawing from Lebanon; connections between Syrian sponsored or supported terrorists with terrorist groups to the 9/11 attacks; and U.S. efforts against Hezbollah.

I will be offering an amendment in the nature of a substitute that will update the bill to address and reflect the current situation with respect to Syria, particularly its linkage to attacks against coalition forces, U.S. citizens, and other innocents in Iraq.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for bringing this important measure before the Committee today, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT WEXLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. Chairman,

Over a year ago, this Committee held a hearing on the Syria Accountability Act of 2002. At that time, I expressed my concern for Syria's support of terror, occupation of Lebanon, continued development of weapons of mass destruction and growing relationship with the Iraqi regime. I also conveyed my fear that these developments threatened to undermine the security of the United States, our success in the war against terror, the stability of the Middle East, and American attempts to contain Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Chairman, since last year's hearing it has become painstakingly clear that the situation in Syria has not improved. We know that President al-Asad has acquired and developed weapons of mass destruction, occupied a sovereign country for over twenty years, supports and harbors Hizballah and Palestinian terrorists, and continues to allow Syrian nationals—as well as foreign terrorists—to enter Iraq, undermining the security of the region and posing a direct threat to American troops.

The very notion that fewer U.S. sanctions apply to Syria than any other country on the State Department's terrorist list is unconscionable. This is why I strongly support this legislation, because it sends an unequivocal message to Syria—a message that is long overdue—that its hostile actions will be met with consequences. That it will face a series of diplomatic and economic sanctions until Syria changes its ways. That the time has come for Bashar al-Asad to choose whether he wants Syria to be viewed as a viable partner in the international community or remain a pariah, terrorist state.

To add insult to injury, in the past week we have discovered that members of the U.S. military may have infiltrated Guantanamo Bay, posing as translators and clergy, sabotaging interviews with al-Qaeda terrorists, compromising the security of the facility, and transmitting classified information to Syria. I trust that the Bush Administration is taking every step necessary to investigate this potentially grave situation and punish those individuals who have damaged our national security. It is in this vein that I plan to offer an amendment that holds Syria responsible for the harm its espionage activities may have caused to the United States.

Mr. Chairman, four months ago I traveled to Syria and met with President Asad. During our meeting, President Asad expressed his strong desire to improve his relationship with Washington and reinvigorate peace negotiations with Israel. I expressed, in no uncertain terms, that his efforts would be futile unless he responded to the visit of Secretary Powell to Syria in May with significant positive steps—including closing its border with Iraq, taking definitive action against Hizballah and Islamic Jihad, and shutting down Palestinian terrorist offices in Damascus.

Mr. Chairman, President Asad's policies appear unchanged, and he has undeniably failed to meet Secretary Powell's demands. Just two weeks ago, Ambassador Bremer revealed that the largest group of foreign nationals captured in Iraq have been Syrians, some of whom are guilty of targeting and killing American troops. And events of the past week—including the discovery of a terrorist camp near Damascus and allegations of Syrian spies in the United States—only demonstrate

President Asad's increased contempt for America and insatiable propensity for feeding the flames of terror in the Middle East.

One of the most consistent and disconcerting Syrian policies has been its continued military rule over Lebanon and use of Hizballah as a proxy for violence against Israel. Make no mistake, Syria—through its illegal occupation of Lebanon—controls the policies of Hizballah, which have included the recent shooting of an Israeli soldier through the so-called “good fence”, the tragic bombing of the U.S. embassy and marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, the unprovoked kidnaping of Israeli soldiers, and Katushya and mortar attacks on Israel's northern border aimed at escalating violence in the Middle East.

It is clear, Mr. Chairman, that the Syrian occupation of Lebanon threatens American interests in the region, the security of our ally Israel and the future of the Lebanese people, who deserve the right of self-governance and freedom.

For too long U.S. policy has cow-towed to an undeserving Syrian regime as it played a duplicitous game of providing Washington with intelligence, while at the same time, continuing its support for the infrastructure of global terror. I hope that President Asad understands that no one in Washington is fooled anymore, and the time for soft pedaling with Syria is over. This is why I urge Congress and the Bush Administration support this critical legislation and pass the Syria Accountability Act.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE NICK SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. Chairman, the Syrian regime's open state sponsorship of terrorism and abetting of forces actually attacking American troops would be shocking if we were not already so acquainted with Syria's nefarious activities.

Syria has been included on the State Department's list of countries that support terrorism since 1979. Its terrorist beneficiaries include organizations like Hamas, Hizballah, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Hizballah, of course, is the terrorist group responsible for killing 241 Marines in Lebanon in 1983 and seizing American hostages in Lebanon throughout the '80s.

Syria's most recent activities include smuggling military equipment to Saddam Hussein's troops before and during the war and assisting anti-American “volunteers” with crossing the border to attack U.S. troops even now. Again, this is not shocking—Syria's foreign minister declared just six and a half months ago: “Syria's interest is to see the invaders defeated in Iraq.”

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee on the Middle East had the opportunity to hear Under Secretary Bolton when he addressed us just a few weeks ago. Mr. Bolton testified that Syria ranks just behind Iran, North Korea, and Libya among the greatest threats to national security. And yet, unlike these two Axis of Evil nations and Libya, our policies relating to Syria have sometimes seemed . . . optimistic.

In the immediate aftermath of 9–11, Syria reportedly helped investigate Al Qaeda operatives and operations. Various reports credited Syrian supplied tips with foiling Al Qaeda plots and saving American lives. Since that time, however, President Bashar al-Asad has been visited by Secretary Powell and advised to sever ties with terrorism, help the U.S. find key Saddam Hussein officials, and discourage the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). The U.S. has also warned Syria to control the terrorist groups operating across its borders, bring quiet to the Israeli-Lebanese border, and secure the border with Iraq. All of these points seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

Mr. Chairman, I support this bill today because it is time to send a serious message to the Syrian regime: their actions against American troops and other allies in the region will not be tolerated. Their efforts to acquire deadlier weapons-of-mass destruction will not be unanswered. I am not a co-sponsor of this bill because I have reservations about the effectiveness of sanctions—they often seem to exhaust Congress' will to act without achieving actual results. Still, this bill is a logical increase of pressure and I hope that the Syrian government appreciates the serious message that it contains. If not, I trust the committee will not be satiated by its actions here today and will remain committed to working towards a full resolution of these issues.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOSEPH CROWLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for bringing this important bill before the Committee, and I would also like to thank Mr. Lantos for his strong words of support for this piece of legislation that was introduced by my fellow New Yorker, Mr. Engel, and my good friend from Florida, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

I strongly support this bill. It makes it clear to the regime in Damascus that it must take steps to rejoin the community of responsible nations or suffer consequences.

For too long, Syria has been given a pass by the United States. As far as I am concerned, Syria is a rogue regime. The Syrian government facilitates violent attacks against Israel and its neighbors through its support for Palestinian extremists and the Lebanese Hizballah. They have conducted and supported cross-border terrorist attacks against Israel, such as the attack in Haifa that claimed 19 innocent Israeli lives, for which Israel recently struck back. I fully support Israel's right to defend herself against the terrorists who threaten her citizens.

Syrian troops have occupied Lebanon for more than 25 years, trampling on the sovereignty of the Lebanese people and stifling opportunities for economic reconstruction and political reconciliation. If the Syrian regime wants to continue these activities and remain isolated from the international community, the United States should assist it in this effort by treating it like the outlaw state that it is.

That is why I am so pleased to see the Committee taking action on this bill. Congress must pass this bill into law, which will put an end to economic and commercial cooperation with Syria.

Hopefully this legislation will give President Asad an incentive to contribute to international peace and security rather than undermine it. It is critical that Congress send President Asad a clear message that the Syrian government needs to change its stripes.

The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act sends just such a message.

Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RON PAUL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my strong opposition to this ill-conceived and ill-timed legislation. This bill will impose what is effectively a trade embargo against Syria and will force the severance of diplomatic and business ties between the United States and Syria. It will also significantly impede travel between the United States and Syria. Worse yet, the bill also provides essentially an open-ended authorization for the President to send U.S. taxpayer money to Syria should that country do what we are demanding in this bill.

This bill cites Syria's alleged support for Hamas, Hizballah, Palestine Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and other terrorist groups as evidence that Syria is posing a threat to the United States. But none of these organizations targets the United States. Not since the Hizballah bombing of a U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983 has any of these organizations attacked the United States. After that tragic attack on our Marines, who were sent to Beirut to intervene in a conflict that had nothing to do with the United States, President Ronald Reagan very wisely ordered their withdrawal from that volatile area. Despite what the interventionists constantly warn, the world did not come to an end back in 1983 when the President decided to withdraw from Beirut and leave the problems there to be worked out by those countries most closely involved.

What troubles me greatly about this bill is that although the named, admittedly bad, terrorist organizations do not target the United States at present, we are basically declaring our intention to pick a fight with them. We are declaring that we will take pre-emptive actions against organizations that apparently have no quarrel with us. Is this wise, particularly considering their capacity to carry out violent acts against those with whom they are in conflict? Is this not inviting trouble by stirring up a hornet's nest? Is there anything to be gained in this?

I am also concerned about the timing of this bill. As we continue to pursue Al-Qaeda—most of which escaped and continue to operate—it seems to me we need all the help we can get in tracking these criminals down and holding them to account for the attack on the United States. As the Associated Press reported this week:

“So, too, are Syria's claims, supported by U.S. intelligence, that Damascus has provided the United States with valuable assistance in countering terror.

“The Syrians have in custody Mohammed Haydar Zammer, believed to have recruited some of the September 11 hijackers, and several high-level Iraqis who were connected to the Saddam Hussein government have turned up in U.S. custody.”

If Syria is providing assistance to the United States in tracking these people down—any assistance—it can only be considered an extremely positive and welcome development. Does anyone here care to guess how much assistance Syria will be providing us once this bill is passed? Can we afford to turn our back on Syria’s assistance, even if it is not as complete as it could be?

That is the problem with this approach. Imposing sanctions and cutting off relations with a country is ineffective and counterproductive. It is only one-half step short of war and very often leads to war. That is why I am very pleased to hear Chairman Hyde’s comments here today regarding the necessity of maintaining full diplomatic relations with Syria. As Chairman Hyde has stated, you cannot make peace if you do not talk to each other. Unfortunately that is just what this bill does: it will severely restrict trade with Syria and may well even completely eliminate any trade between the two countries. It will almost completely shut the door on diplomatic relations. It sends a strong message to Syria and the Syrian people: that we no longer wish to engage you. This cannot be in our best interests.

This bill may even go further than that. In a disturbing bit of *déjà vu*, the bill makes references to “Syria’s acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD),” and threatens to “impede” Syrian weapons ambitions. This was the justification for our intervention in Iraq, yet after more than a thousand inspectors have spent months and some 300 million dollars, none have been found. Will this bill’s unproven claims that Syria has WMD be later used to demand military action against that country?

Mr. Chairman: history is replete with examples of the futility of sanctions and embargoes and travel bans. More than 40 years of embargo against Cuba have not produced the desired change there. Sadly, embargoes and sanctions most often hurt those least responsible. A trade embargo against Syria will hurt American businesses and will cost American jobs. It will make life more difficult for the average Syrian—with whom we have no quarrel. Making life painful for the population is not the best way to win over hearts and minds. I strongly urge my colleagues to reject this counterproductive bill.

