

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. J. RES. 6

Directing the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in
Syria that have not been authorized by Congress.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 23, 2025

Mr. PAUL introduced the following joint resolution; which was read twice and
referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

JOINT RESOLUTION

Directing the removal of United States Armed Forces from
hostilities in Syria that have not been authorized by
Congress.

Whereas Congress has the sole power to declare war under
the War Powers Clause of section 8 of article I of the
Constitution of the United States;

Whereas the Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public
Law 107–40; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) against the perpetra-
tors of the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, which
was enacted on September 18, 2001, and the Authoriza-
tion for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of
2002 (Public Law 107–243; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note), which
was enacted on October 16, 2002, do not serve as specific
statutory authorizations for the use of force against
Syria;

Whereas, on December 19, 2024, the Department of Defense announced that there are approximately 2,000 members of the United States Armed Forces deployed to Syria, 1,100 more than previously reported;

Whereas United States military operations in Syria began on September 22, 2014, over 13 years after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, with Operation Inherent Resolve targeting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS);

Whereas United States forces in Syria have targeted numerous entities, including the Syrian Armed Forces and pro-Syrian Government forces, numerous terrorist organizations including ISIS, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard, Iranian-backed militias, the Russian-backed Wagner private military company, and the Armed Forces of Turkey;

Whereas, on October 30, 2015, the Obama administration deployed boots on the ground, announcing that up to 50 United States special operations forces would be deployed to Syria;

Whereas, on April 25, 2016, the Obama administration announced that an additional 250 United States special operations forces would be deployed to Syria;

Whereas, on December 6, 2017, the Pentagon revealed that there were about 2,000 members of the United States Armed Forces deployed in Syria, 1,500 more than previously reported;

Whereas, since 2016, United States Armed Forces have targeted personnel, platforms, and facilities of the Syrian Armed Forces or forces allied with the Government of Syria on at least 11 occasions, including on April 7, 2017, when United States forces fired 59 Tomahawk

cruise missiles at Shayrat Airbase controlled by the Government of Syria. Syrian government officials indicated the strike killed 16 people, including seven military personnel;

Whereas, on February 7, 2018, United States Armed Forces in Syria killed hundreds of Russians who were part of the Russian-backed Wagner private military company;

Whereas, on April 12, 2018, CIA Director Mike Pompeo told the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, “In Syria, now, a handful of weeks ago, the Russians met their match. A couple hundred Russians were killed.”;

Whereas, on December 19, 2018, President Donald J. Trump ordered the withdrawal of all United States military forces from Syria, a policy that was not implemented;

Whereas, on February 28, 2019, President Trump declared that “100 percent” of the Islamic State caliphate had been defeated, therefore achieving the objective of Operation Inherent Resolve;

Whereas United States and Turkish forces have fired on one another in Syria, as evidenced by the Pentagon reporting on October 11, 2019, that United States troops in northern Syria came under artillery fire from Turkish armed forces and former United States Special Presidential Envoy for the anti-ISIS coalition Brett McGurk stating, “Turkish forces have fired on a declared U.S. military outpost in northern Syria. Turkey knows all of our locations down to the precise grid coordinate.”;

Whereas, on October 6, 2019, President Trump ordered the withdrawal of United States Armed Forces from northern Syria;

Whereas United States forces in Syria are regularly attacked by Iranian-backed militias resulting in casualties;

Whereas, on February 25, 2021, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes in eastern Syria against facilities used by Iran-backed militias in response to attacks against United States and allied personnel in Iraq that killed a Filipino contractor and injured a National Guardsman and four United States contractors;

Whereas, on June 27, 2021, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against Iran-backed militias in Syria in response to drone attacks against United States personnel and facilities in Iraq;

Whereas, on August 24, 2022, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against Iran-backed militias in Deir al Zour, Syria, in response to attacks on a United States base in northeastern Syria that injured three United States soldiers;

Whereas, on March 24, 2023, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against Iran-backed militias in Syria in response to an attack in northeast Syria that killed a United States contractor and injured five United States soldiers and another United States contractor;

Whereas, on October 5, 2023, a United States F-16 aircraft shot down an armed Turkish drone operating in northeastern Syria, and the drone was reported to have come within 500 yards of United States troops;

Whereas, since October 17, 2023, United States Armed Forces in Syria and Iraq have been attacked at least 52 times, with 28 attacks in Syria and 24 attacks in Iraq, resulting in at least 56 members of the United States

Armed Forces being injured and at least 25 sustaining traumatic brain injuries;

Whereas, on October 26, 2023, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against a weapons storage facility and an ammunition storage facility used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iranian-backed militias in Abu Kamal, Syria;

Whereas, on November 8, 2023, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against a weapons storage facility used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iranian-backed militias in Maysalun, Syria;

Whereas, on November 12, 2023, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against a training facility and a safe house used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iranian-backed militias in Abu Kamal and Mayadin, Syria;

Whereas, on February 2, 2024, United States Armed Forces conducted more than 85 airstrikes against Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and affiliated militia groups across seven locations in Syria and Iraq;

Whereas, on November 12, 2024, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against a weapons storage and logistics headquarters facility used by Iranian-backed militias in Syria;

Whereas, on December 8, 2024, opposition groups led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a United States-designated foreign terrorist organization, overthrew the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, ending more than 53 years of al-Assad family rule;

Whereas, on December 9, 2024, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces shot down a United States Air Force MQ-9 Reaper drone in northern Syria;

Whereas, on December 10, 2024, United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes on some 75 ISIS targets in Syria;

Whereas, the collapse of the Bashar al-Assad regime presents an acute period of volatility, with 2,000 United States troops deployed in Syria facing significant risk, as is evident by regularly occurring attacks, and facing an imminent threat of wider hostilities involving them in Syria;

Whereas, eleven members of the United States Armed Forces died in combat-related and non-combat related events in Syria during Operation Inherent Resolve: SSGT Austin Bieren, SCPO Scott Dayton, MSG Jonathan Dunbar, CW2 Jonathan Farmer, 1SG Casey Hart, SCPO Shannon Kent, SPC Antonio Moore, SGT Bryan Mount, SPC Etienne Murphy, SPC Alex Ram, and PFC Michael Thomason;

Whereas section 8(c) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1547(c)) defines the “introduction of United States Armed Forces” to include “the assignment of members of such Armed Forces to command, coordinate, participate in the movement of, or accompany the regular or irregular military forces of any foreign country or government when such military forces are engaged, or there exists an imminent threat that such forces will become engaged, in hostilities,” and activities that the United States Armed Forces have conducted in Syria fall within such definition, as is evidenced by United States support of the People’s Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian

Democratic Forces (SDF), the Free Syrian Army (FSA), and other regular and irregular military forces;

Whereas the United States Armed Forces have been introduced into active or imminent hostilities within the meaning of section 4(a) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1543(a)), and activities that the United States Armed Forces have conducted in Syria fall within such definition, as evidenced by strikes on the Syrian Armed Forces and pro-Syrian Government forces, various terrorist organizations including ISIS, Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard, Iranian-backed militias, the Russian-backed Wagner private military company, and the armed forces of Turkey;

Whereas section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(c)) states that “at any time that United States Armed Forces are engaged in hostilities outside the territory of the United States, its possessions and territories without a declaration of war or specific statutory authorization, such forces shall be removed by the President if the Congress so directs”; and

Whereas section 1013 of the Department of State Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1984 and 1985 (50 U.S.C. 1546a) provides that “[a]ny joint resolution or bill [to require] the removal of United States Armed Forces engaged in hostilities . . . without a declaration of war or specific statutory authorization shall be considered in accordance with the procedures of section 601(b) of the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976”: Now, therefore, be it

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

1 **SECTION 1. REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES**
 2 **FROM HOSTILITIES IN SYRIA THAT HAVE NOT**
 3 **BEEN AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS.**

4 Pursuant to section 1013 of the Department of State
 5 Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1984 and 1985 (50
 6 U.S.C. 1546a) and in accordance with the provisions of
 7 section 601(b) of the International Security Assistance
 8 and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 (Public Law 94–
 9 329; 90 Stat. 765), Congress hereby directs the President
 10 to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities in
 11 or affecting Syria by not later than the date that is 30
 12 days after the date of the adoption of this joint resolution
 13 (unless the President requests and Congress authorizes a
 14 later date), and unless and until a declaration of war or
 15 specific authorization for such use of United States Armed
 16 Forces has been enacted.

17 **SEC. 2. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING AUTHORIZA-**
 18 **TIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE.**

19 Consistent with section 8(a)(1) of the War Powers
 20 Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1547(a)(1)), nothing in this joint
 21 resolution may be construed as authorizing the use of mili-
 22 tary force.

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