

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. J. RES. 51

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

NOVEMBER 15, 2023

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.

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

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Congress has the sole power to declare war
6 under the War Powers Clause of section 8 of article
7 I of the Constitution of the United States.

8 (2) There are 900 members of the United
9 States Armed Forces deployed in Syria.

1 (3) Congress has not declared war against
2 Syria or any organization or group in Syria.

3 (4) The Authorization for Use of Military Force
4 (Public Law 107–40; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) against
5 the perpetrators of the terror attacks on September
6 11, 2001, which was enacted on September 18,
7 2001, and the Authorization for Use of Military
8 Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law
9 107–243; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note), which was enacted
10 on October 16, 2002, do not serve as specific statu-
11 tory authorizations for the use of force against
12 Syria.

13 (5) United States military operations in Syria
14 began on September 22, 2014, more than 13 years
15 after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, with
16 Operation Inherent Resolve targeting the Islamic
17 State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

18 (6) Since September 22, 2014, the United
19 States Armed Forces have been introduced into hos-
20 tilities in Syria, against both State and non-state ac-
21 tors.

22 (7) The United States Armed Forces in Syria
23 have targeted numerous entities, including the Syr-
24 ian Armed Forces and pro-Syrian government
25 forces, terrorist organizations, including ISIS, the

1 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iranian-backed
2 militias, the Russian-backed Wagner Group, and the
3 armed forces of Turkey.

4 (8) On October 30, 2015, the administration of
5 President Barack Obama deployed members of the
6 United States Armed Forces, announcing that up to
7 50 special operations forces would be deployed to
8 Syria.

9 (9) On April 25, 2016, the Obama administra-
10 tion announced that an additional 250 special oper-
11 ations forces would be deployed to Syria.

12 (10) On December 6, 2017, the Secretary of
13 Defense revealed that there were approximately
14 2,000 members of the United States Armed Forces
15 deployed in Syria.

16 (11) Since 2016, United States Armed Forces
17 have targeted personnel, platforms, and facilities of
18 the Syrian Armed Forces or forces allied with the
19 Government of Syria on at least 11 occasions, in-
20 cluding on April 7, 2017, when United States Armed
21 Forces fired 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at
22 Shayrat Airbase controlled by the Syrian Govern-
23 ment. Syrian Government officials indicated the
24 strike killed 16 people, including 7 military per-
25 sonnel.

1 (12) On February 7, 2018, members of the
2 United States Armed Forces in Syria killed hun-
3 dreds of Russian citizens who were members of the
4 Russian-backed Wagner Group.

5 (13) On April 12, 2018, Director of the Central
6 Intelligence Agency Mike Pompeo told the Com-
7 mittee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, “In
8 Syria, now, a handful of weeks ago, the Russians
9 met their match. A couple hundred Russians were
10 killed.”.

11 (14) On December 19, 2018, President Donald
12 J. Trump ordered the withdrawal of all United
13 States Armed Forces from Syria, a policy that was
14 not implemented, as 900 members of the United
15 States Armed Forces remain in Syria.

16 (15) On February 28, 2019, President Trump
17 declared that 100 percent of the Islamic State ca-
18 liphate had been defeated, therefore achieving the
19 objective of Operation Inherent Resolve.

20 (16) On October 11, 2019, the Secretary of De-
21 fense reported that members of the United States
22 Armed Forces in northern Syria came under artil-
23 lery fire from Turkish Armed Forces.

24 (17) Former United States Special Presidential
25 Envoy for the anti-ISIS coalition Brett McGurk

1 stated, “Turkish forces have fired on a declared
2 United States military outpost in northern Syria.
3 Turkey knows all of our locations down to the pre-
4 cise grid coordinate.”.

5 (18) On July 11, 2019, Presidential candidate
6 Joseph R. Biden, Jr., promised to “end forever wars
7 in Afghanistan and the Middle East” and stated
8 that “Staying entrenched in unwinnable conflicts
9 only drains our capacity to lead on other issues that
10 require our attention.”

11 (19) On October 6, 2019, President Trump or-
12 dered the withdrawal of United States Armed Forces
13 from northern Syria.

14 (20) United States Armed Forces in Syria are
15 regularly attacked by Iranian-backed militias, result-
16 ing in casualties.

17 (21) On February 25, 2021, President Joseph
18 R. Biden, Jr., ordered the United States Armed
19 Forces to carry out airstrikes in eastern Syria
20 against facilities used by Iran-backed militias in re-
21 sponse to attacks against United States and allied
22 personnel in Iraq that killed a Filipino contractor
23 and injured a National Guardsmen and 4 United
24 States contractors.

1 (22) On June 27, 2021, President Biden or-
2 dered the United States Armed Forces to carry out
3 airstrikes against Iran-backed militias in Syria in re-
4 sponse to drone attacks against United States per-
5 sonnel and facilities in Iraq.

6 (23) On August 24, 2022, President Biden or-
7 dered the United States Armed Forces to carry out
8 airstrikes against Iran-backed militias in Deir al
9 Zour, Syria, in response to attacks on a United
10 States base in northeastern Syria that injured 3
11 members of the United States Armed Forces.

12 (24) On March 24, 2023, President Biden or-
13 dered the United States Armed Forces to carry out
14 airstrikes against Iran-backed militias in Syria in re-
15 sponse to an attack in northeast Syria that killed a
16 United States contractor and injured 5 members of
17 the United States Armed Forces and another United
18 States contractor.

19 (25) On October 5, 2023, a United States F-
20 16 aircraft shot down an armed Turkish drone oper-
21 ating in northeastern Syria. The drone was reported
22 to have come within 500 yards of members of the
23 United States Armed Forces.

24 (26) Since October 17, 2023, United States
25 Armed Forces in Syria and Iraq have been attacked

1 at least 52 times, with 28 attacks in Syria and 24
2 attacks in Iraq. Such attacks resulted in at least 56
3 members of the United States Armed Forces being
4 injured, of whom at least 25 members have sus-
5 tained traumatic brain injuries.

6 (27) On October 26, 2023, President Biden or-
7 dered United States Armed Forces to conduct air-
8 strikes against a weapons storage facility and an
9 ammunition storage facility used by the Islamic Rev-
10 olutionary Guard Corps and Iranian-backed militias
11 in Abu Kamal, Syria.

12 (28) On November 8, 2023, President Biden
13 ordered United States Armed Forces to conduct air-
14 strikes against a weapons storage facility used by
15 the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iranian-
16 backed militias in Maysalun, Syria.

17 (29) On November 12, 2023, President Biden
18 ordered United States Armed Forces to conduct air-
19 strikes against a training facility and a safe house
20 used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and
21 Iranian-backed militias in Abu Kamal and Mayadin,
22 Syria.

23 (30) Nine members of the United States Armed
24 Forces have been killed in Syria since the com-
25 mencement of Operation Inherent Resolve: Staff

1 Sergeant Austin Bieren, Senior Chief Petty Officer
2 Scott Dayton, Master Sergeant Jonathan Dunbar,
3 Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jonathan Farmer, Senior
4 Chief Petty Officer Shannon Kent, Specialist Antonio
5 Moore, Sgt. Bryan Mount, Specialist Etienne Mur-
6 phy, and Private First Class Michael Thomason.

7 (31) The 900 members of the United States
8 Armed Forces deployed in Syria face significant
9 risk, as is evidenced by regularly occurring attacks,
10 and an imminent threat of wider hostilities involving
11 such members of the United States Armed Forces in
12 Syria.

13 (32) Section 8(c) of the War Powers Resolution
14 (50 U.S.C. 1547(c)) defines the “introduction of
15 United States Armed Forces” to include “the as-
16 signment of members of such Armed Forces to com-
17 mand, coordinate, participate in the movement of, or
18 accompany the regular or irregular military forces of
19 any foreign country or government when such mili-
20 tary forces are engaged, or there exists an imminent
21 threat that such forces will become engaged, in hos-
22 tilities”. Activities that the United States Armed
23 Forces have conducted in Syria fall within such defi-
24 nition, as is evidenced by United States support of
25 the People’s Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian

1 Democratic Forces (SDF), the Free Syrian Army
2 (FSA), and other regular and irregular military
3 forces in Syria.

4 (33) The United States Armed Forces have
5 been introduced into active or imminent hostilities
6 within the meaning of section 4(a) of the War Pow-
7 ers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1543(a)). Activities that
8 the United States Armed Forces have conducted in
9 Syria fall within such meaning, as evidenced by
10 strikes on the Syrian Armed Forces, pro-Syrian gov-
11 ernment forces, various terrorist organizations, in-
12 cluding ISIS, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard
13 Corps, Iranian-backed militias, the Russian-backed
14 Wagner Group, and the Armed Forces of Turkey.

15 (34) Section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution
16 (50 U.S.C. 1544(c)) states, “at any time that
17 United States Armed Forces are engaged in hos-
18 tilities outside the territory of the United States, its
19 possessions and territories without a declaration of
20 war or specific statutory authorization, such forces
21 shall be removed by the President if the Congress so
22 directs”.

23 (35) Section 1013 of the Department of State
24 Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1984 and 1985 (50
25 U.S.C. 1546a) provides, “Any joint resolution or bill

1 [to require] the removal of United States Armed
2 Forces engaged in hostilities . . . without a declara-
3 tion of war or specific statutory authorization shall
4 be considered in accordance with the procedures of
5 section 601(b) of the International Security Assist-
6 ance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976”(Public
7 Law 94–329; 90 Stat. 765).

8 **SEC. 2. REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES**
9 **FROM HOSTILITIES IN SYRIA THAT HAVE NOT**
10 **BEEN AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS.**

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

1 **SEC. 3. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING AUTHORIZA-**
2 **TIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE.**

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

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