

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 32

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas since its invasion of the Lebanese Republic in 1976, the regime of the Syrian Arab Republic has implemented a systematic policy of occupation over Lebanon that has transformed the political, social, and economic character of Lebanon;

Whereas on July 20, 1976, President Hafez al-Assad of Syria stated that “Syria and Lebanon were one state and one people”;

Whereas, on October 13, 1990, the Syrian occupation of Lebanon was complete, when Syrian troops launched aerial and ground attacks and occupied the Lebanese presidential palace and the Ministry of Defense, ousting the constitutional government of Prime Minister Michel Aoun of Lebanon;

Whereas the Syrian regime appointed their own proxy government and president in occupied Lebanon, and started a large-scale persecution operation against the Lebanese people by arresting, abducting, torturing, and killing opponents of the occupation;

Whereas, on May 22, 1991, following the occupation of Beirut, Lebanon, Syria concluded the Brotherhood Treaty for Coordination and Cooperation with Lebanon;

Whereas this treaty solidified the integration of the two countries in matters of security and intelligence, finance and trade, and industry and agriculture, by establishing the mechanism for Syrian command under the cover of “joint” decisionmaking;

Whereas the Syrian regime has continued to employ a wide range of policy means to transform Lebanon into a “client state” and a Syrian political satellite;

Whereas Syria clearly tampered with the Lebanese parliamentary elections of 1992, 1996, and 2000, by amending electoral laws which delineated voting districts and laid down intricate procedures for the elections, which were rigged in a way to guarantee results favorable to Syria;

Whereas Syrian-backed ad-hoc modifications to the Lebanese constitution extended by three years the presidential tenure of Lebanese president Elias Harawi, allowed Emile Lahoud, commander of the Lebanese army, to become president, and extended Lahoud's term in contravention of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559;

Whereas Lebanese judicial institutions have been utilized and mobilized to impose Syrian control, including the routine issuance of death sentences *in absentia* against expatriates and opposition leaders;

Whereas Lebanese Broadcasting Law No. 382 of 1994 provided the legislative framework for controlling and restricting Lebanese radio and television;

Whereas the restrictions on the free flow of information and opinion in Lebanon is in sharp contrast to the legacy of journalism in that country;

Whereas it is widely reported that Syria has utilized the practices of kidnapping and arresting Lebanese citizens, using torture against them, and causing their virtual disappearance;

Whereas Human Rights Watch reported that in November 1999 Syrian authorities in Damascus, Syria, offering no explanation whatsoever, returned to his family the dead body of Lebanese citizen Adel Khalaf Ajouri, aged 52, who had "disappeared" in 1990;

Whereas within Lebanon itself, Syria reportedly operated detention facilities in Tripoli, Beirut, Shtaura in the Bekka Valley, and Anjar on the Lebanese-Syrian border;

Whereas "Syrian order" in Lebanon was institutionalized when Damascus led the process of disarming the Leba-

nese militias, except for Hezbollah, which Syria retains as a terrorist proxy engaged against the State of Israel;

Whereas Lebanon, under the control of Syria, continues to serve as a major training center for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command;

Whereas a number of Lebanese government officials have actively facilitated and contributed to the Syrian occupation and its activities, thereby threatening regional and global security;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 calls for the “strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon”, the withdrawal from Lebanon of “all remaining foreign forces”, “the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias”, and “the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory”;

Whereas, on February 14, 2005, a bomb exploded in Beirut, Lebanon, killing at least 15 people, including Rafik Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon, and wounding approximately 100 other innocent victims;

Whereas after the bombing, President George W. Bush stated during an address in Brussels that “Our shared commitment to democratic progress is being tested in Lebanon, a once-thriving country that now suffers under the influence of an oppressive neighbor”, called on Syria to “end its occupation of Lebanon”, and reiterated the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559;

Whereas Lebanese opposition leaders gathered after Hariri was killed and issued a statement demanding Syrian troop withdrawal from Lebanon within the next three months, calling for the resignation of the current Lebanese cabinet, and declaring that “we will fight the current regime and demand our right for a neutral government that makes sure Lebanon steps forward from being a captive state to regaining its full independence and sovereignty”; and

Whereas the ongoing mass demonstrations by the Lebanese people resulted in the dramatic resignation of the Lebanese Cabinet on February 28, 2005: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—*

3 (1) the Lebanese Republic is a captive country;

4 (2) the occupation of Lebanon represents a
 5 long-term threat to the security of the Middle East
 6 and United States efforts to promote political and
 7 economic liberalization in the region, and this issue
 8 should be raised by the President and the Secretary
 9 of State in all appropriate bilateral and multilateral
 10 forums;

11 (3) the President should direct the United
 12 States Permanent Representative to the United Na-
 13 tions to present and secure support for a United Na-
 14 tions Security Council Resolution classifying Leb-
 15 anon as a captive country and calling for the imme-

1 diate release of all Lebanese detainees in Syria and
2 Lebanon;

3 (4) the President should freeze all assets in the
4 United States belonging to Lebanese government of-
5 ficials who are found to support and aid the occupa-
6 tion of Lebanon by the Syrian Arab Republic;

7 (5) all countries should fully and immediately
8 implement United Nations Security Council Resolu-
9 tion 1559;

10 (6) it should be the policy of the United States
11 to—

12 (A) support independent human rights and
13 pro-democracy advocates in Lebanon; and

14 (B) seek the full restoration of sovereign
15 democratic rule in Lebanon; and

16 (7) the United States should provide assistance
17 through the Middle East Partnership Initiative and
18 the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative
19 for broadcasts and civil society efforts to assist indi-
20 viduals, organizations, and entities that support

1 Lebanese sovereignty and the promotion of democ-
2 racy in Lebanon.

Passed the House of Representatives March 17,
2005.

Attest:

Clerk.

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Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the occupation of the Lebanese Republic by the Syrian Arab Republic.