

New York Congressman Gary Ackerman Resolution on Lebanon Passed by US Congress, Condemns Syria, Iran

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(Washington, DC) - U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-NY) today led the House of Representatives to pass of his resolution calling for strong U.S. support for the government of Lebanon by a vote of 415 to 2. Ackerman, the chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, made the following statement on the floor of the House during consideration of the measure.

"Mr. Speaker, what's been happening in Lebanon is extreme aggression in the classic sense of the word. Through a campaign of assassinations targeting Lebanese parliamentarians and political figures; bombings in public places; threats to establish an alternative extra-constitutional government; and the instigation of a jihadi insurgency by the Fatah al-Islam, Syria, Iran and their boot-licking proxies, Hezbollah, Amal and Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement, have brought Lebanon's government to a constitutional crisis. Yet again, outside actors have pushed Lebanon to the brink of civil war for their own selfish interests.

Just 6 days ago, on September 19, a massive car bomb killed Antoine Ghanem along with 5 other civilians, and left many dozens of innocent bystanders wounded. Mr Ghanem, a member of the Lebanese parliament, and a supporter of the Siniora government, was just the latest in a string of 11 political assassinations over the past three years. As a consequence of this pattern of violence, the March 14 alliance is 2 parliamentarians away from being murdered out of their majority.

Now is the time for this Congress to send a strong message of support for the democratically elected and fully legitimate government in Lebanon. Time, Mr. Speaker, is short. The Syrian-backed campaign of murder is creeping ever closer to its goal of destroying the majority of the Lebanese parliament, bringing down the government of Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, and again imposing a pro-Syrian president on Lebanon.

Fearing just this scenario, months ago, I introduced H.Res. 548, with the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Pence, with Chairman Lantos, and Representatives Issa and Boustany, two Members whose roots extend back to Lebanon. This bipartisan resolution expresses the strong support of the House of Representatives for Lebanon's elected government, and affirms our readiness to make that support tangible in order to help preserve and strengthen Lebanese sovereignty and independence.

The resolution condemns Syria and Iran for providing arms to Lebanese militias, particularly the terrorist group Hezbollah, and Palestinian factions in Lebanon, in clear contravention of Security Council resolutions.

H. Res. 548 also endorses "prompt action" by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon established by the Security Council to investigate the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005. Syria must know with utter certainty that the United States will never sacrifice justice in Lebanon to allow Damascus to escape accountability for its crimes.

The current Lebanese government, which is under siege, is both legitimate and representative of the majority of Lebanese. The attempts to undermine it are not some kind of retaliation. Lebanon's government is being systematically attacked only because it is unwilling to subordinate its authority and Lebanon's sovereignty to external and extra-legal demands.

Quite simply, Lebanon is being bullied. And in light of this fact, the United States and the entire international community must come to its aid.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution."

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http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ny05_ackerman/WGS_092507.html

 US House votes to 'strongly back' Siniora Cabinet

Daily Star staff
Thursday, September 27, 2007

WASHINGTON: US Congressman Gary L. Ackerman led the House of Representatives Wednesday in pass a resolution calling for strong US support for the government of Lebanon by a vote of 415 to 2. Ackerman, the chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, warned the House that "Lebanon is being bullied by Iran, Syria and their proxies, Hizbullah, Amal and Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement."

Citing the campaign of assassinations, bombings, weapons smuggling and the instigation of a jihadi insurgency, Ackerman accused Damascus and Tehran of destabilizing Lebanon in order to pursue their own national interests.

"Now is the time for Congress to send a strong message of support for the democratically elected and fully legitimate government in Lebanon" Ackerman said.

"Time is short. The Syrian-backed campaign of murder is creeping ever closer to its goal of destroying the majority of the Lebanese Parliament, bringing down the government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, and again imposing a pro-Syrian president on Lebanon."

"The current Lebanese government, which is under siege, is both legitimate and representative of the majority of Lebanese. The attempts to undermine it are not some kind of retaliation. Lebanon's government is being systematically attacked only because it is unwilling to subordinate its authority and Lebanon's sovereignty to external and extra-legal demands," Ackerman added.

The resolution condemns Syria and the Islamic Republic for providing weapons to Lebanese militias, particularly to Hizbullah, and Palestinian factions in Lebanon in clear contravention of Security Council resolutions, and endorses "prompt action" by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon established by the Security Council to investigate the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005. The resolution also pledges continued US material support to help preserve and strengthen Lebanese sovereignty and independence.

On September 19, a massive car bomb killed lawmaker Antoine Ghanem along with four other civilians, and left many dozens of innocent bystanders wounded. Ghanem, a member of the Lebanese Parliament and a supporter of the Siniora government, was just the latest in a string of 11 political assassinations over the past three years. As a consequence of this pattern of violence, the Lebanon's ruling March 14 alliance's majority has dropped from 72 to 68 out of 127. - The Daily Star

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=85621

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/printable.asp?art_ID=85621&cat_ID=2

H.RES.548

Title: Expressing the ongoing concern of the House of Representatives for Lebanon's democratic institutions and unwavering support for the administration of justice upon those responsible for the assassination of Lebanese public figures opposing Syrian control of Lebanon.

Sponsor: Rep Ackerman, Gary L. [NY-5] (introduced 7/16/2007) Cosponsors (52)

Latest Major Action: 9/25/2007 Passed/agreed to in House. Status: On motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 415 - 2 (Roll no. 899).

Jump to: Summary, Major Actions, All Actions, Titles, Cosponsors, Committees, Related Bill Details, Amendments

SUMMARY AS OF:

7/16/2007--Introduced.

Condemns: (1) the attempts by Hezbollah and other pro-Syrian groups to undermine the government of Lebanon; (2) the assassination campaign targeting members of parliament and public figures in favor of Lebanese independence; and (3) Syria and Iran for their ongoing roles in arming Lebanese militias.

Confirms U.S. support for U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning Lebanon, and the clear and binding mandate of the international community for the arms embargo and disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon.

Expresses appreciation to the countries whose military personnel serve in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Urges the government of Lebanon to request UNIFIL's assistance to secure the Lebanese-Syrian border.

Affirms U.S. support for efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005, and both prior and subsequent politically inspired assassinations.

Pledges continued support for the government of Lebanon and the Lebanese people against the campaign of terror directed at the Lebanese people and at political and public figures opposing Syrian interference in Lebanon.

Commends the many Lebanese who continue to adhere to the principles of the Cedar Revolution.

Applauds the government of Lebanon's efforts to fully extend Lebanon's sovereignty over the entire country.

MAJOR ACTIONS:

7/16/2007 Introduced in House

9/25/2007 Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 415 - 2 (Roll no. 899).

ALL ACTIONS:

7/16/2007:

Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

7/31/2007:

Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.

7/31/2007:

Committee Agreed to Seek Consideration Under Suspension of the Rules, (Amended) by Unanimous Consent.

9/25/2007 12:05pm:

Mr. Ackerman moved to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended.

9/25/2007 12:07pm:

Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H10776-10778)

9/25/2007 12:16pm:

At the conclusion of debate, the Yeas and Nays were demanded and ordered. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8, rule XX, the Chair announced that further proceedings on the motion would be postponed.

9/25/2007 2:50pm:

Considered as unfinished business. (consideration: CR H10801-10802)

9/25/2007 3:13pm:

On motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 415 - 2 (Roll no. 899). (text: CR H10776-10777)

9/25/2007 3:13pm:

Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.

TITLE(S): (*italics indicate a title for a portion of a bill*)

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

Expressing the ongoing concern of the House of Representatives for Lebanon's democratic institutions and unwavering support for the administration of justice upon those responsible for the assassination of Lebanese public figures opposing Syrian control of Lebanon.

COSPONSORS(52), ALPHABETICAL [followed by Cosponsors withdrawn]: (Sort: by date)

Rep Arcuri, Michael A. [NY-24] - 7/25/2007

Rep Berkley, Shelley [NV-1] - 7/25/2007

Rep Berman, Howard L. [CA-28] - 7/25/2007

Rep Bishop, Timothy H. [NY-1] - 7/25/2007

Rep Blumenauer, Earl [OR-3] - 7/25/2007

Rep Bordallo, Madeleine Z. [GU] - 7/27/2007

Rep Boustany, Charles W., Jr. [LA-7] - 7/16/2007

Rep Burton, Dan [IN-5] - 7/24/2007

Rep Crowley, Joseph [NY-7] - 7/24/2007

Rep Dent, Charles W. [PA-15] - 7/30/2007

Rep English, Phil [PA-3] - 9/19/2007
Rep Ferguson, Mike [NJ-7] - 8/1/2007
Rep Gonzalez, Charles A. [TX-20] - 8/1/2007
Rep Hall, John J. [NY-19] - 7/25/2007
Rep Hastings, Alcee L. [FL-23] - 7/30/2007
Rep Hensarling, Jeb [TX-5] - 7/30/2007
Rep Higgins, Brian [NY-27] - 7/25/2007
Rep Inglis, Bob [SC-4] - 9/24/2007
Rep Israel, Steve [NY-2] - 7/25/2007
Rep Issa, Darrell E. [CA-49] - 7/16/2007
Rep Jackson-Lee, Sheila [TX-18] - 7/25/2007
Rep Kagen, Steve [WI-8] - 7/25/2007
Rep Klein, Ron [FL-22] - 7/25/2007
Rep Lamborn, Doug [CO-5] - 9/19/2007
Rep Lantos, Tom [CA-12] - 7/16/2007
Rep Mack, Connie [FL-14] - 7/25/2007
Rep Maloney, Carolyn B. [NY-14] - 7/25/2007
Rep Manzullo, Donald A. [IL-16] - 7/25/2007
Rep McCarthy, Carolyn [NY-4] - 7/26/2007
Rep McCotter, Thaddeus G. [MI-11] - 7/24/2007
Rep McNulty, Michael R. [NY-21] - 7/25/2007
Rep Meeks, Gregory W. [NY-6] - 7/25/2007
Rep Murphy, Christopher S. [CT-5] - 7/25/2007
Rep Nadler, Jerrold [NY-8] - 7/31/2007
Rep Pallone, Frank, Jr. [NJ-6] - 9/19/2007
Rep Payne, Donald M. [NJ-10] - 7/25/2007
Rep Pence, Mike [IN-6] - 7/16/2007
Rep Perlmutter, Ed [CO-7] - 7/25/2007
Rep Price, David E. [NC-4] - 9/19/2007
Rep Rothman, Steven R. [NJ-9] - 7/25/2007
Rep Sanchez, Linda T. [CA-39] - 8/1/2007
Rep Schakowsky, Janice D. [IL-9] - 7/30/2007
Rep Schiff, Adam B. [CA-29] - 7/25/2007
Rep Scott, David [GA-13] - 8/1/2007
Rep Sherman, Brad [CA-27] - 7/25/2007
Rep Sires, Albio [NJ-13] - 7/25/2007
Rep Smith, Christopher H. [NJ-4] - 7/31/2007
Rep Towns, Edolphus [NY-10] - 7/25/2007
Rep Waters, Maxine [CA-35] - 7/25/2007
Rep Weiner, Anthony D. [NY-9] - 7/25/2007
Rep Wexler, Robert [FL-19] - 7/23/2007
Rep Wolf, Frank R. [VA-10] - 7/25/2007

COMMITTEE(S):

Committee/Subcommittee: Activity:
House Foreign Affairs Referral, Markup

RELATED BILL DETAILS:

NONE

AMENDMENT(S):

NONE

Whereas on February 14, 2005, former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, along with 22 other people, was

assassinated by a massive bomb; (Engrossed as Agreed to or Passed by House)

HRES 548 EH

H. Res. 548

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

September 25, 2007.

Whereas on February 14, 2005, former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, along with 22 other people, was assassinated by a massive bomb;

Whereas Lebanon's Cedar Revolution led to the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in April 2005, following 30 years of Syrian military occupation;

Whereas parliamentary elections were held in Lebanon in May and June of 2005 leading to the formation of a government under Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, with a majority of the parliament and cabinet committed to strengthening Lebanon's independence and the sovereignty of its democratic institutions of government;

Whereas Lebanese independence and sovereignty are still threatened by an ongoing campaign of assassination and attempted assassinations of Lebanese political and public figures opposed to Syrian interference in Lebanon's internal affairs, and terrorist bombings intended to incite ethnic and religious hatred, the continuing presence of state-sponsored militias and foreign terrorist groups, and the ongoing and illegal trans-shipment of weapons and munitions from Iran and Syria into Lebanon;

Whereas the democratically-elected and legitimate government of Lebanon, in accordance with the mandate of United Nations Security Council resolutions and the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, has made efforts, through the internal deployments of the Lebanese Armed Forces, to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapon or authority within Lebanon other than that of the Government of Lebanon;

Whereas the Lebanese Council of Ministers, on November 25, 2006, approved a statute for the establishment of a tribunal of an international character according to the terms negotiated between the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations in order to bring to justice all those responsible for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005;

Whereas a majority of Lebanese members of parliament sought a vote in favor of ratifying the statute establishing a tribunal of an international character, and 70 of Lebanon's then 127 parliamentarians sent a memorandum to the United Nations Secretary-General endorsing the establishment under the United Nations Charter of a Special Tribunal to bring to justice all those responsible for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005;

Whereas the Lebanese parliament is scheduled to convene on September 25, 2007, to begin the process of electing the next President of Lebanon;

Whereas Hezbollah, a United States Department of State-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, and their pro-Syrian allies have declared the democratically-elected and legitimate Government of Lebanon 'unconstitutional', and are seeking to topple the government through extra-legal means, including rioting, continuous street demonstrations outside of the Council of Ministers, and obstructing traffic in Beirut;

Whereas the transfer of weapons, ammunition, and fighters into Lebanon in contravention of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006), has twice prompted the Security Council to issue statements, on April 17, 2007, (S/PRST/2007/12) and on June 11, 2007, (S/PRST/2007/17) wherein it expressed deep and serious concern at mounting information by Israel and other states of illegal movements of arms into Lebanon, and in particular across the Lebanese-Syrian border, in violation of Security Council Resolution 1701;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council, with the full support of the United States, has repeatedly adopted resolutions, notably, Resolutions 425 (1978), 520 (1982), 1559 (2004), 1655 (2006), 1664 (2006), 1680 (2006), 1701 (2006), and 1757 (2007) that, among other things, express the support of the international community for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon, and demand the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolutions, notably, 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), 1644, (2005), 1664 (2006), 1748 (2007), and 1757 (2007), underscore the importance of the pursuit of justice in response to the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005, and if appropriate, other assassinations and assassination attempts since October 2004;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council, with the full support of the United States, has sought to assist the

Government of Lebanon in extending its authority over all Lebanese territory, including its sea, land, and air borders, through the presence of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon and through technical and personnel assistance;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council, with the full support of the United States, has strongly supported the demand of the Lebanese people that justice be done to those responsible for the terrorist attack of February 14, 2005, and other terrorist attacks and attempted assassinations since October 2004, establishing and extending the mandate of the International Independent Investigation Commission (IIIC) to investigate terrorist bombings of February 14, 2005, and moving toward the creation of a Special Tribunal of an international character, according to United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), 1644 (2005), 1664 (2006), 1686 (2006) and 1748 (2007);

Whereas Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora in a letter of May 14, 2007, informed the Secretary General of the United Nations that, `the Lebanese Government believes that the time has come for the Security Council to help make the Special Tribunal for Lebanon a reality. We therefore ask you, as a matter of urgency, to put before the Security Council our request that the Special Tribunal be put into effect. A binding decision regarding the Tribunal on the part of the Security Council will be fully consistent with the importance the United Nations has attached to this matter from the outset, when the investigation commission was established. Further delays in setting up the Tribunal would be most detrimental to Lebanon's stability, to the cause of justice, to the credibility of the United Nations itself and to peace and security in the region.';

Whereas the United Nations Security Council, with the full support of the United States, adopted Resolution 1757, establishing on June 10, 2007, a Special Tribunal to try all those found responsible for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005, and if appropriate, both prior and subsequent attacks in Lebanon, unless the Government of Lebanon has provided notice that such a tribunal has been established under its own laws;

Whereas the United States Congress has appropriated emergency economic and military assistance to Lebanon at levels far greater than the amounts of bilateral assistance provided in recent fiscal years; and

Whereas it is manifestly in the interests of the United States and the international community to support the full sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, its democratically-elected and legitimate government, and to insist that justice be done concerning the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005, and both prior and subsequent politically-inspired assassinations and assassination attempts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

(1) condemns the attempts by Hezbollah and other pro-Syrian groups to undermine and intimidate the democratically-elected and legitimate Government of Lebanon by extra-legal means;

(2) condemns the campaign of attempted and successful assassinations targeting members of parliament and public figures in favor of Lebanese independence and sovereignty and opposed to Syrian interference in Lebanon, and bombings in civilian areas intended to intimidate the Lebanese people;

(3) calls on the Lebanese parliament to elect a new President in accordance with the processes and timetable established by Lebanon's constitution;

(4) declares that the association of political parties with terrorist organizations, militias, and other elements retaining armed operational capabilities outside of the official military and security institutions of the Government of Lebanon hinders the emergence of a fully-democratic Lebanon;

(5) confirms the strong support of the United States for United Nations Security Council resolutions concerning Lebanon, and the clear and binding mandate of the international community for the arms embargo and disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, and particularly, Hezbollah and Palestinian factions in Lebanon;

(6) condemns Syria and Iran for their ongoing roles in providing arms to terrorist organizations, Lebanese militias, and other militias operating in Lebanon, in blatant contravention of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701;

(7) declares that the United States should consider Syria's obstructive role in Lebanon when assessing the status and nature of United States bilateral relations with Syria;

(8) expresses its strong appreciation to Belgium, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, and Turkey for their contributions of military personnel to serve in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), now manned with 13,251 troops of the 15,000 troops authorized in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701;

(9) urges the Government of Lebanon to request UNIFIL's assistance to secure the Lebanese-Syrian border against the entry of illicit arms or related material under paragraphs 11(f) and 14 of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, and pledges earnest American support for this action, should the Government of Lebanon choose to do so;

(10) calls on the international community to further support the mission of UNIFIL and efforts by the United Nations Secretary-General to improve the monitoring of the Lebanese border in order to effectively implement the arms embargo on armed groups in Lebanon required by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701;

(11) affirms strongly United States support for efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005, and both prior and subsequent politically inspired assassinations, and for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon established by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1757;

(12) endorses prompt action by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005, and both prior and subsequent politically-inspired assassinations, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter;

(13) pledges continued support for the democratically-elected and legitimate Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese people against the campaign of intimidation, terror, and murder directed at the Lebanese people and at political and public figures opposing Syrian interference in Lebanon;

(14) commends the many Lebanese who continue to adhere steadfastly to the principles of the Cedar Revolution and support the democratically-elected and legitimate Government of Lebanon;

(15) applauds the Government of Lebanon's efforts to fully extend Lebanon's sovereignty over the entire country through the internal deployments of the Lebanese Armed Forces, including direct action against the Fatah al Islam group, and encourages the Government of Lebanon to intensify these efforts; and

(16) re-affirms its intention to continue to provide financial and material assistance to support the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon.

Attest:

Clerk.

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:HRes548:/](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:HRes548/)