

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Iranian regime is the number one state sponsor of terror in the whole world, and they commit terrorist acts even against their own people.

I am proud to support H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, introduced by my friend, Chairman MCCAUL.

The mullahs in Tehran are among the world's worst human rights abusers. This year, we have witnessed their brutality again on display as they continue to mercilessly crush dissent from their own people.

International attention has faded, but the Iranian people are still in the streets demanding their rights, whether they be economic opportunity, access to water, religious freedom, or gender equality. In response, the regime has murdered dozens and locked up thousands, as it has done so many times before, without punishment from the outside world.

This is nothing new for the Islamic Republic. Look no further than the 1988 massacre, where 30,000 of Iran's political prisoners were systematically murdered by the regime.

This barbaric mass execution occurred by public hangings, firing squads, and included teenagers and pregnant women who refused to announce their political affiliations, including many from the MEK, today's leading Iranian dissident group.

So horrific was the act that deputy to Iran's ruler at the time, Ayatollah Khomeini, called it: "The greatest crime committed during the Islamic Republic for which history will condemn us." And, yes, history now condemns the regime for these acts of murder.

This bill will provide for that condemnation and call for investigation into this crime against humanity. It also urges our government to work with international partners and investigate other major human rights abuses, such as the dozens more killed during protests in 1999, 2009, and 2017, and sanction those responsible.

In all cases, the families of those murdered by the regime were never told what happened to their loved ones' remains. This important bill will pressure the Iranian Government to disclose the final resting place of the missing so their families may have a small bit of peace.

Mr. Speaker, now is the day of reckoning for the Iranian regime.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the United States and Iran's leaders are at odds on a host of issues. Iran has killed Americans in Iraq. Its proxies seek to harm our citizens and our interests around the world. But let me be clear: the United States has no quarrel with the Iranian people.

□ 1645

This legislation seeks to protect the human rights of the Iranian people and

Americans who are unfairly detained in Iran. This bill signals our solidarity with the protestors and demonstrators to Iran's rulers that any action that violates the human rights of an American will be met with severe consequences.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) just mentioned the 1988 massacre that was horrendous, and there were many, many more. This brutal regime has blood on its hands, and it is important for the United States to call them out.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I would again like to thank my colleagues, Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member ENGEL, for their bipartisan leadership to hold Iran accountable, to hold them accountable for their brutality: their brutality in the 1988 massacres, and their brutality in terms of the way they are treating their religious minorities today.

We know that Americans formerly imprisoned by Iran describe being subjected to electric shock and whippings. We have heard that before our committee. We have heard them say that they were denied medical care.

Today, U.S. citizens, such as Siamak and Baqer Namazi, Xiyue Wang, and U.S. permanent resident Nazar Zaka, are all sitting in Iranian jails on bogus accusations of collaborating with a hostile government for espionage. And U.S. citizen Robert Levinson is still missing, and that is more than 10 years after he disappeared in Iran. Our hearts go out to these victims and our hearts go out to their families as we renew our call for the immediate release of all U.S. citizens and permanent residents held in Iran.

With this legislation, we will impose tough sanctions on the regime. And we do that for its corruption, for its attacks on innocent Americans, and for its attacks on Iranians alike.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support for H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, introduced by my fellow Texas delegate Congressman Michael McCall and fellow House Judiciary colleague Congressman Ted Deutch.

H.R. 4744 states that Congress stands with the people of Iran, and it provides the Trump administration with the tools necessary to hold Iranian government officials responsible for human rights violations, corruption, and censorship.

Moreover, this legislation holds the Iranian regime accountable for taking hostage American citizens and permanent residents by ensuring that those responsible pay an extreme but just price for the violations committed.

I applaud the House Foreign Affairs Committee for their support in passing this critical piece of legislation.

And I sincerely hope that this bill passes the Senate and arrives at the President's desk to

be promptly signed into law so we can begin to hold the Iranian regime accountable for their gross human rights violations.

The Iranian regime continues to perpetuate gross human rights abuses against its own people.

The regime continues to suppress the country's voices for reform through censorship of the media.

The regime continues to recklessly use the nation's resources to expand its regional influence through its support for terrorist groups.

The regime continues to engage in corrupt practices.

And the regime continues to illegally detain and imprison our citizens without just cause or reason.

These practices are unacceptable.

H.R. 4744 serves as a clear signal to the people of Iran that we support them in their quest for freedom, it shines a light on the regime's human rights violations and sanctions those who are complicit in such crimes.

The same goes for Iranian officials guilty of corruption, censorship, and the diversion of goods intended for the Iranian people.

Lastly, this bill sanctions individuals complicit in taking Americans and other nation's citizens hostage and requires the President to work with our international partners to develop a strategy to put an end to this practice.

We have five Americans currently detained in Iran—an intolerable circumstance that calls for action.

We must do all we can, and apply as much pressure on Iran as necessary to ensure the American detainees' safe release, and prevent future Americans from being held hostage by this brutal regime.

I thank Congressman MCCAUL and DEUTCH for their leadership on this legislation to hold Iran's corrupt officials accountable.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill's passage, and the passage of all the important measure before us today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4744, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### NO ASSISTANCE FOR ASSAD ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4681) to limit assistance for areas of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4681

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “No Assistance for Assad Act”.

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Seven years into the conflict in Syria, over 11 million Syrians have been displaced from their homes and more than 400,000 have been killed.

(2) Since the conflict in Syria began, the United States has provided more than \$7.6 billion to meet humanitarian needs of the Syrian people, making the United States the world’s single largest donor to the Syrian humanitarian response.

(3) It is estimated that the reconstruction of Syria could cost between \$200 and \$350 billion.

(4) According to the 2016 Transparency International Corruption Index, Syria is among the most corrupt countries in the world.

(5) In October 2015, a visiting Russian delegation to Syria announced that Russian firms would lead in the effort to rebuild Syria, and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad reportedly said, “Syria is ready to provide Russian companies with all the contracts worth hundreds of billions of dollars.”

(6) In August 2017, the Government of the People’s Republic of China hosted a trade fair in Syria, and a Chinese-Arab business group announced a \$2,000,000,000 commitment from the Chinese government to fund the construction of industrial parks in Syria.

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

It is the policy of the United States that United States foreign assistance made available for early recovery, reconstruction, or stabilization in Syria should be used only in a democratic Syria or in areas of Syria not controlled by a government led by Bashar al-Assad or associated forces.

**SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE FOR AREAS OF SYRIA CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA OR ASSOCIATED FORCES.**

(a) LIMITATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (c), for each of the fiscal years 2019 through 2023, amounts authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for assistance described in paragraph (2) may not be provided, directly or indirectly, for any area of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces, as determined by the Secretary of State, unless a certification described in subsection (b) is in effect.

(2) ASSISTANCE DESCRIBED.—Assistance referred to in paragraph (1) is the following:

(A) Assistance to carry out stabilization activities for the relevant area.

(B) Assistance to carry out reconstruction activities for the relevant area.

(b) CERTIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A certification described in this subsection is a certification submitted by the President to the appropriate congressional committees that contains a determination that the Government of Syria—

(A) has ceased attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure as such, including attacks against medical facilities and personnel, and the indiscriminate use of weapons, including through shelling and aerial bombardment, as demanded in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015);

(B) is taking verifiable steps to release all political prisoners and is providing full access to Syrian prisons for investigations by appropriate international human rights organizations;

(C) is taking verifiable steps to remove from government positions senior officials of the Government of Syria who are complicit

in the planning or commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or human rights abuses, as well as any government official subject to sanctions under any provision of law;

(D) is organizing free and fair elections for a new government to be held in a timely manner and under the supervision of United Nations observers, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate, as supported in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015);

(E) is making tangible progress toward establishing an independent judiciary;

(F) is demonstrating respect for and compliance with internationally recognized human rights and basic freedoms as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(G) is taking steps to verifiably fulfill its commitments under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is making tangible progress toward becoming a signatory to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, and adhering to the Missile Technology Control Regime and other control lists, as necessary;

(H) has halted the development and deployment of ballistic and cruise missiles;

(I) is taking verifiable steps to remove from positions of authority within the military, intelligence, and security services those individuals who were in a position of authority or responsibility during the conflict, or who are in a position of authority or responsibility during a transition, who are determined to be responsible for or complicit in the torture, extrajudicial killing, or execution of civilians, to include those who were involved the planning or execution of plans to use chemical weapons;

(J) is making verifiable progress in reforming the Syrian military and security services so as to minimize the Government of Syria’s reliance on Iran and Iranian proxy forces to act on behalf or in support of Syria; and

(K) is in the process of organizing the safe and voluntary return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes so that Syrians may return without fear of retribution by the Government of Syria or associated forces.

(2) EFFECTIVE PERIOD.—A certification shall be in effect under this subsection for a period of 90 days beginning on the date on which the President submits the certification to the appropriate congressional committees.

(3) RENEWAL OR REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees a certification under this subsection the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees either—

(A) a new certification under this subsection indicating that the conditions described in paragraph (1) are continuing to be met; or

(B) a report that—

(i) describes why the President is unable to make a new certification under this subsection; and

(ii) contains a certification that no funds will be obligated or expended to provide assistance described in subsection (a) in contravention of subsection (a).

(c) EXCEPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The limitation on assistance under subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to—

(A) assistance for projects to be administered by local organizations that reflect the

aims, needs, and priorities of local communities in Syria;

(B) assistance for projects to meet basic human needs in Syria, including—

(i) drought relief;

(ii) assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons, and conflict victims;

(iii) the distribution of food and medicine; and

(iv) the provision of health services; and

(C) assistance to carry out the activities described in subsection (b)(1)(G).

(2) REPORT AND DETERMINATION.—The President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report and determination for each of the fiscal years 2019 through 2023 on each project with respect to which this subsection applies during the preceding fiscal year, including—

(A) a description of the project;

(B) a description of how United States funds with respect to the project were used;

(C) the geographic location or locations of the project; and

(D) a determination with respect to whether the project benefited an official of the Assad regime.

(3) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, to the greatest extent practicable, the United States should not fund projects described in this subsection with respect to which the Government of Syria, any official of the Government of Syria, and any immediate family member of an official of the Government of Syria have a financial or material interest or are affiliated with the implementing partner of the project.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(2) ASSOCIATED FORCES.—The term “associated forces” includes forces of the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iranian-backed proxy militias, and Hezbollah.

(3) DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.—The term “directly or indirectly” includes assistance to multilateral institutions and international governmental organizations, such as the United Nations and related agencies, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.

**SEC. 5. REPORT ON DELIVERY OF UNITED STATES HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on delivery of United States humanitarian assistance to Syria.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of the challenges of access to areas of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces for purposes of providing United States humanitarian assistance, including assistance funded through multilateral institutions and international governmental organizations.

(2) A description of where such United States humanitarian assistance has been able to be delivered in such areas.

(3) A description of where such United States humanitarian assistance has been denied access in such areas.

(4) A description of how the United States Government is working to improve access to such areas.

(5) A description of the roles and responsibilities of United States allies and partners and other countries in the region in ensuring access to such areas.

(6) A description of how such United States humanitarian assistance and implementing partners of such assistance are monitored and evaluated.

(7) A description of the major challenges that the United States faces in monitoring such United States humanitarian assistance and how the United States is working to overcome such challenges.

(8) A description of the strategy of the United States to deliver humanitarian assistance to areas of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces and in which the Government of Syria or associated forces is impeding access to such areas.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” and “associated forces” have the meanings given such terms in section 4(f).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill comes at a very critical time. After 7 years of devastating civil war, the destruction inflicted on the Syrian people by the Assad regime and its allies is catastrophic. By catastrophic, we mean a half million dead and we mean 14 million souls pushed out of their homes in that civil war.

Even now, Iranian-backed militias are engaged in sectarian cleansing. Ethnic cleansing was supposed to be something of the past. They are forcing people from their homes, and Russian warplanes continue to drop bombs on hospitals. Just 2 weeks ago, the regime again used chemical weapons outside of Damascus as part of an operation that has displaced 55,000 people in this latest operation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the ranking member of our committee, Mr. ELIOT ENGEL, because during this period of time—and we have assisted in this effort—but during this period of time, he has tried to lead in getting a solution to the problem of that civil unrest in Syria, which began with people on the streets in Damascus marching, saying: “Peaceful, peaceful.” From day one, he has led an effort to try to focus us on trying to resolve this crisis.

Unfortunately, as the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum noted in a recent re-

port, the situation on the ground is getting even worse in Syria, and the worst, they say, is probably yet to come.

At the same time as this carnage is going on, representatives of Syria, Iran, and Russia have spread out across the international community trying to gin up reconstruction money. They will not find it here.

It would be unconscionable for U.S. Government function to be used for stabilization or reconstruction in the areas under control of the illegitimate Assad regime and its proxies, and I will tell you why: because the people in those areas that they have taken over are being pushed out. And the militia that are being brought in are militia—whether it is Hezbollah or other militia—that are not indigenous to those communities. We are not going to support the building of infrastructure that is going to benefit Hezbollah, Iran’s revolutionary guards, or foreign militias recruited and paid for by the Iranian regime.

If or when the day comes that the Government of Syria is no longer led by Bashar al-Assad and his proxies, then the U.S. can once again look at the prospect for assistance, if the day comes when people are allowed to return to their homes. We do have an interest in seeing a stable and secure—and not hostile—Syria one day.

But until then, murder, industrial level torture, starvation, deliberate targeting of schools, hospitals, and markets, and the shameless use of chemical weapons cannot be in the remotest way possible supported by U.S. funding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Members join with us to ensure no U.S. funding makes it into the hands of the Assad regime and his proxies.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,  
Washington, DC, April 16, 2018.

Hon. ED ROYCE,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing concerning H.R. 4681, the No Assistance for Assad Act.

As a result of your having consulted with the Committee on Financial Services concerning provisions in the bill that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction, I agree to forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor. The Committee on Financial Services takes this action with our mutual understanding that, by foregoing consideration of H.R. 4681, at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for any such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding

with respect to H.R. 4681 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration thereof.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, April 17, 2018.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,  
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4681, the No Assistance for Assad Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4681 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,  
Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of the No Assistance for Assad Act.

This act, H.R. 4681, was written by me. I am proud to be the lead sponsor in this bill. And I am proud of the bipartisan support that we have gotten from Chairman ROYCE and others on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, every time we think that the crisis in Syria could not get any worse, the Assad regime manages to plunge the country into even deeper depths. Children living in besieged Madaya could not get food, so they resort to eating leaves. A 7-year-old and her mother tweeted good-bye messages from Aleppo under siege. What has happened recently in eastern Ghouta is just unfathomable.

The White Helmets—first responders—rushing to the scene of an aerial attack, have been targeted themselves once they arrived to render aid. And the regime has continued using chemical weapons, which the world swore we would never use again. But no matter how Assad’s victims have met their ends—from nerve gas or barrel bombs or at the hands of Assad’s Russian or Iranian patrons—the loss of innocent life is staggering.

My heart really bleeds for the people of Syria. What they have had to endure should not be endured by anyone. The United States needs to be vocal and we need to take action.

As we continue to find some way to end the bloodshed, we also need to start thinking about what will come down the road.

This bill says that American assistance for reconstruction in Syria should be available in areas controlled by Assad only if the regime stops indiscriminate use of weapons, ends attacks on civilians and civilian facilities, releases political prisoners, allows human rights organizations access to the prisons, and removes senior officials complicit in human rights abuses.

If Bashar al-Assad—the butcher of Syria—wants to destroy his own country and then expects the United States to pick up the pieces, he is sorely mistaken. That simply won't happen. He and Russia and Iran broke Syria, and now they have to buy it.

We were careful in crafting this legislation to ensure that these limitations won't affect locally administered projects. And the bill permits humanitarian assistance to all in need.

Recovery in Syria will be a slow and painful process. But we cannot allow those responsible for hundreds of thousands of murders to control American dollars meant to help the country rebuild.

Who in the Foreign Affairs Committee can forget those horrendous pictures taken of all these dead corpses lying one by one right next to each other? Who could ever forget those atrocities that are being put up with by the people of Syria each and every day?

I am grateful for the bipartisan support this bill has already received. I particularly want to thank Congressman KINZINGER, Congressman BOYLE, and Chairman ROYCE for their partnership in crafting this legislation.

This legislation sends a message—particularly after the Assad regime again used chemical weapons—that we are closely watching the developments in Syria and that the United States will not assist those who are party to such heinous war crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER), the primary Republican cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, and the co-chair of the Friends of a Free, Stable, and Democratic Syria Caucus with me, Representative BOYLE, for their work on this bill.

In the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, we thought it was going to be peaceful. Since then, 500,000 Syrians are dead—50,000 of which are children—at the hands of the brutal Assad regime.

Assad, his regime, Russia, and Iran have committed genocide across Syria. They have targeted hospitals and schools, and they have destroyed critical infrastructure with indiscriminate barrel bombs and airstrikes. They reduced much of the country to rubble. As long as Assad is in power, they should be fully responsible for rebuilding.

The No Assistance for Assad Act would place conditions on American non-humanitarian assistance in Syrian territories controlled by the Assad regime or their allies.

By limiting our reconstruction assistance to Assad, we send a strong message that the American people will not support any efforts to legitimize or bolster the barbaric Assad regime—a regime that uses chemical weapons on its own innocent civilians, as we saw especially recently.

We have seen far too many horrifying images of the bloody and besieged children across Syria, suffering at the hands of an evil war criminal.

As of January 2018, the United States has provided more than \$7.7 billion in humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria. We will continue to support the innocent victims with emergency food, safe drinking water, shelter, and other vital resources that they desperately need.

Separately, this legislation places strict conditions on the non-humanitarian assistance for things like early recovery, stabilization, and reconstruction in the Assad-controlled Syrian territories.

The release of all political prisoners and providing full access to Syrian prisoners for human rights investigations and removing those human rights abusers from positions of authority are just two of the conditions included in this bill. The Syrian Government must also end all attacks against civilians and halt the development and deployment of ballistic and cruise missiles.

For our own national security and that of our allies, we must do all we can now to prevent the next generation of terrorists down the road.

□ 1700

Without hope and opportunity, the people of Syria and those across the Middle East will become prime recruits for groups like ISIS, Hezbollah, and others.

The United States of America must take a stand against the genocide in Syria, the inhumane war crimes against the innocent people of Syria, and the oppressive strongmen, those like Assad.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4681, the No Assistance for Assad Act.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I also want to thank and express my support for Ranking Member ENGEL's bill, H.R. 4681, the No Assistance for Assad Act. As he said, Assad is a butcher, a butcher of his own people.

Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad continues to murder the Syrians en masse

and destroy what was once a great ancient land. Because of the world's inaction, he is close to victory. He has proven that evil triumphs when good men and women do nothing.

Now Syria is in ruins and it must be rebuilt, but in the lands that Assad and his thugs control, we should play no part in helping his regime look like the saviors of the country. He and his Russian and Iranian backers must foot the bill for the destruction they brought upon Syria. Assad and his murderous supporters will try to use any reconstruction to cover up for their crimes.

That is why it is important we pass H.R. 4681, to restrict any U.S.-funded reconstruction assistance to areas the Syrian regime controls.

The American people are kind; they are generous and will always help those in need. We always have—history proves it—but we will not pay for a propaganda win for brutal dictators like Assad.

Let Assad and his buddies, the Iranians and the Russians, rebuild Assad's territory. His regime has weaponized humanitarian aid throughout the war, and we can only expect him to continue to do so as he tries to retake territory.

So, for now, let Assad rule over the ruins of the old Syria, the Syria he destroyed, and no U.S. money should ever go to Assad. One day, the Assads will be gone, but until then, we should not provide a dime of American money to strengthen his rule and grip over that land.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, reconstruction and stabilization of a post-ISIS Syria is estimated to cost in the neighborhood of \$300 billion.

And, by the way, I wish I could say a post-Assad Syria, because he is the one who really should go.

The Syrian regime has spent the last 6 years destroying civilian infrastructure and driving people from their homes. It is simply not the role of the United States to support reconstruction in Syria, especially if the Assad regime continues to suppress the Syrian people and there is no accountability for his war crimes.

For those who are considering investing in Syrian reconstruction in Assad-controlled territories, just know that Syria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Therefore, it should be expected that reconstruction money would be syphoned off to those who have perpetrated war crimes and those who facilitate terrorism. We must prevent this.

Again, we must not forget the plight of the Syrian people. We must continue to stand with the Syrian people. We must demand that there is an end to all chemical weapons and all weapons killing civilians with barrel bombs, with people trying to get out of the way, little children dying with their mothers, in their mother's hands. This cannot continue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I would like to thank Ranking Member ENGEL and Representative KINZINGER for their exceptional work on this important bill. This bill will keep taxpayer dollars out of the hands of a murderous regime and its proxies.

Time and again, Mr. ELIOT ENGEL has been this body's conscience on the issue of Syria. We have acted many times, passing the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act twice; adopting H. Con. Res. 121, which expressed the sense of the Congress supporting the establishment of a tribunal in Syria to try Assad's war crimes, another measure we had passed.

While we have made important progress in the military campaign against ISIS, there is no end in sight to the misery inflicted on the people of Syria by Assad and his proxies. Now is not the time to turn away. As we engage, we cannot allow U.S. taxpayer money to reward war crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4681, the No Assistance for Assad Act, introduced by my good friend Rep. ENGEL, the Ranking Member of our committee. I commend Rep. ENGEL and Rep. KINZINGER for advancing this important measure in a bipartisan manner to demonstrate the broad agreement in this House that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has no future as the legitimate leader of the Syrian people.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would effectively block most categories of U.S. assistance to areas of Syria controlled by the Assad regime unless it is delivered through trusted local partners or serves basic humanitarian needs. In creating strict conditions for the provisions of U.S. assistance to regime-controlled areas, this bill ensures that the United States will not help those responsible for destroying Syria to profit from rebuilding it.

Mr. Speaker, the Syrian regime, Russia, and Iran have played both arsonist and firefighter in Syria's devastating civil war—and now they want to play the role of predatory developer, sopping up reconstruction contracts to pad their pockets and further determine Syria's future in line with their narrow political agendas.

Mr. Speaker, Assad long ago surrendered his last shred of legitimacy as president of Syria. His regime's horrific chemical attack this month in Douma placed this fact once again in high relief. The Trump Administration was right to respond decisively to this barbaric attack with targeted strikes to punish and deter such atrocities perpetrated with chemical weapons.

Mr. Speaker, I have long advocated concrete steps that would ensure the Assad regime, jihadi groups, and others responsible for mass atrocities in Syria face justice for their crimes. This bill rightly insists on the removal of war criminals from the Syrian government as one condition among many for releasing U.S. aid to the regime.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this timely and important measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4681, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO BRING THE 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP COMPETITION TO CANADA, MEXICO, AND THE UNITED STATES

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 111) recognizing and supporting the efforts of the United Bid Committee to bring the 2026 Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup competition to Canada, Mexico, and the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

##### H. CON. RES. 111

Whereas soccer is one of the fastest growing and most popular sports in the world and the FIFA World Cup competition is the single most important event in that sport;

Whereas the United States successfully hosted in 9 cities throughout the Nation the 1994 FIFA World Cup competition, which was broadcast to billions of fans around the world and set an attendance record of nearly 3,600,000, which remains unbroken today;

Whereas the 1994 FIFA World Cup competition served as a catalyst for the increased popularity and development of the game throughout the United States, as well as the introduction of Major League Soccer, the United States national first division professional soccer league;

Whereas United States Soccer Federation and its counterparts in Canada and Mexico have established a United Bid Committee to prepare and submit an unprecedented joint bid to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup competition in North America;

Whereas Canada, the United States, and Mexico share core beliefs in justice, freedom, equality, and opportunity, and have a long history of partnership, innovation, and growth together on our shared continent;

Whereas for the first time in history the 2026 FIFA World Cup will include teams from 48 nations and presents an opportunity for Canada, Mexico, and the United States as host countries to demonstrate the highest achievable standards and serve as a benchmark for future organizers;

Whereas North America is home to one of the most competitive and advanced professional sports landscapes in the world that is continually updating to take advantage of the latest innovations and modernizations;

Whereas numerous American cities have been named by the United Bid Committee as candidates to serve as hosts to FIFA World Cup matches in 2026, with each of these cities embodying the diversity and enthusiasm shared by the entire Nation and guaranteeing each participating team and its followers a "home team" atmosphere;

Whereas the United States and its neighbors offer FIFA a valuable and receptive

market within which to further develop the sport of soccer, which in turn will have significant impact on and off the field in both the United States and throughout the world;

Whereas the United States possesses all necessary state-of-the-art infrastructure in its stadiums and potential host cities to ensure that the competition sets a new standard of quality, comfort, security, and safety for players, officials, spectators, media, and sponsors alike;

Whereas hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Canada, Mexico, and the United States promises record-setting attendance and financial performance, allowing revenues and tourism generated by the competition to be used for the further development of soccer, FIFA's objectives of positive social and environmental change, and further economic growth throughout our Nation;

Whereas hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup competition in Canada, Mexico, and the United States would serve as a tremendous impetus to national and international goodwill, as the competition would bring people from many nations, along with a diverse public, together under one banner of peace, friendship, and spirited and fair competition;

Whereas the historical tradition of inclusivity in the United States is shared by Canada and Mexico and the three countries are eager to welcome the players, spectators, and visitors who may travel to North America for the 2026 FIFA World Cup games; and

Whereas pursuant to FIFA bidding procedures, the President of the United States and certain Federal agencies have been asked to issue guarantees that upon authorization or appropriation, would establish the conditions required to help make the 2026 FIFA World Cup competition the most successful in history; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—*

(1) recognizes and supports the efforts of the United Bid Committee to bring the 2026 FIFA World Cup competition to Canada, Mexico, and the United States;

(2) encourages the President of the United States and appropriate Federal agencies to support the United Bid Committee in its efforts to meet all requirements for the United States to jointly host with Canada and Mexico the 2026 FIFA World Cup competition; and

(3) stands prepared to give full consideration to legislative proposals or other requests by the President to provide support related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup competition, if Canada, Mexico, and the United States are selected to host this event.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).