To authorize assistance to conduct military or paramilitary operations in Syria, and for other purposes.

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

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Congressional Accountability and Oversight in Syria Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 mandates that no security assistance may be provided to any country the government of which
engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.

(2) Section 523 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 states that none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to this Act shall be obligated to finance indirectly any assistance or reparations to Cuba, Iraq, Libya, Iran, Syria, North Korea, or Sudan, unless the President of the United States certifies that the withholding of these funds is contrary to the national interest of the United States.

(3) Under the terms of Resolution 2043 of April 21, 2012, the United Nations Security Council established a United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), for an initial period of 90 days, under the command of a Chief Military Observer, comprising an initial deployment of up to 300 unarmed military observers as well as an appropriate civilian component to fulfill the following mandate: To monitor a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties and to monitor and support the full implementation of the UNSMIS' six-point plan.

(4) On June 15, 2012, UNSMIS suspended its activities owing to an intensification of armed violence across the country.
(5) On July 20, 2012, the Security Council extended UNSMIS for a final period of 30 days. According to Resolution 2059, the Council would only consider further extensions to the mission “in the event that the Secretary-General reports and the Security Council confirms the cessation of the use of heavy weapons and a reduction in the level of violence sufficient by all sides” to allow UNSMIS to implement its mandate.

(6) As the conditions set by the Security Council had not been met, UNSMIS mandate ended at midnight on August 19, 2012.

(7) The al-Nusrah Front is designated by the Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Government of Syria should immediately cease the use of heavy weapons in population centers;

(2) all parties within Syria should bring about a cessation of armed violence in all its forms;

(3) the Secretary of State should continue to list Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism;
(4) in accordance with international law, the Government of Syria should immediately cease the use of chemical weapons; and

(5) if the President considers initiating military action, including imposition of a “no fly” zone or other military operations on Syrian territory, airspace, or waters—

(A) according to article I, section 8, of the United States Constitution, “The Congress shall have Power To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water.”;

(B) according to the War Powers Resolution, “The constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief to introduce United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, are exercised only pursuant to (1) a declaration of war, (2) specific statutory authorization, or (3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces.”; and

(C) the President should adhere to the War Powers Resolution and obtain specific stat-
uty authorization for the use of the United
States Armed Forces in response to the war in
Syria.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE TO CONDUCT
MILITARY OR PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS IN
SYRIA.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding any other
provision of law, no assistance of any kind may be pro-
vided by any United States Government agency for the
purpose, or which would have the effect, of promoting,
augmenting, directly or indirectly, the capacity of any na-
tion, group, organization, movement, or individual to con-
duct military or paramilitary operations in Syria, unless
and until Congress expressly authorizes such assistance by
law enacted after the date of enactment of this section.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) does not apply to
assistance that is solely provided for humanitarian pur-
poses.