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Urging all parties to the conflict in Syria to work through the United Nations and with the international community to hold the Assad regime accountable and resolve the crisis in Syria through a negotiated political settlement.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. HONDA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GRAYSON, and Mr. HUFFMAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Urging all parties to the conflict in Syria to work through the United Nations and with the international community to hold the Assad regime accountable and resolve the crisis in Syria through a negotiated political settlement.

Whereas President Obama is to be commended for rightfully seeking the authorization from Congress on the use of military force in Syria;

Whereas, on August 30, 2013, President Obama stated that the United States has “high confidence that the Syrian regime carried out a chemical weapons attack that killed well over 1,000 people, including hundreds of children”;

Whereas the United States and 188 other countries comprising 98 percent of the world's population are parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, or use of chemical weapons;

Whereas, on August 30, 2013, Secretary of State Kerry stated, "We believe the primary objective is to have a diplomatic process that can resolve this through negotiation because we know there is no ultimate military solution. It has to be political. It has to happen at the negotiating table. And we are deeply committed to getting there.";

Whereas, on August 30, 2013, President Obama stated, "There's not going to be a solely military solution to the underlying conflict and tragedy that's taking place in Syria.";

Whereas, on September 10, 2013, President Obama stated, "the Russian government has indicated a willingness to join with the international community in pushing Assad to give up his chemical weapons," and that "this initiative has the potential to remove the threat of chemical weapons without the use of force, particularly because Russia is one of Assad's strongest allies";

Whereas a military strike could result in grave unintended consequences leading to further loss of life and bloodshed, including retaliation from the Assad regime, the escalation of the war in Syria and possibly the region, and possibly resulting in more threats to United States military and diplomatic facilities in the region or regional partners such as Israel, Turkey, or Jordan;

Whereas a military strike could lead to deeper and more direct United States intervention in the Syrian civil war resulting in unknown costs in both lives and resources;

Whereas a military strike could accelerate the numbers of refugees flowing into neighboring countries and lead to more Syrians being internally displaced;

Whereas, on September 1, 2013, the number of Syrian refugees passed the threshold of 2,000,000 according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and a further 4,250,000 people are displaced inside Syria, according to data as of August 27, 2013, from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs;

Whereas Secretary of State Kerry reaffirmed during his confirmation hearings in January 2013, “A U.N. resolution is a necessary ingredient to provide the legal basis for military action in an emergency.”;

Whereas, at present, there is no United Nations Security Council authorization and international legal justification for a United States attack on Syria and the utilization of military force could both set a dangerous international precedent and significantly weaken the United Nations as an institution;

Whereas the United Nations was established for the purpose of preventing war and resolving conflicts through peaceful means, including “by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional arrangements, or other peaceful means.”;

Whereas, at present, United Nations inspectors investigating the use of chemical weapons in Syria have not completed their work and released their report;

Whereas, according to a Pew Poll taken between August 29 and September 1, 2013, 6 in 10 Americans (61 percent) state that United States airstrikes in Syria are likely to lead to a long-term United States military commitment there, and 3 in 4 Americans (74 percent) state that United States airstrikes in Syria are likely to create a backlash against the United States and its allies in the region;

Whereas the conflict in Syria will only be resolved through a negotiated political settlement, and Congress calls on all parties to the conflict in Syria to work through the United Nations and with the international community; and

Whereas, under the principle of extra-territorial jurisdiction, the United States and other nations should accept a shared responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes against humanity and other crimes under international law committed in Syria, before national courts in fair trials and without recourse to the death penalty: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That the United States should work with the
 3 United Nations and with the international community to
 4 exhaust all appropriate diplomatic and non-military op-
 5 tions to facilitate a negotiated political settlement in Syria
 6 and hold the Assad regime and all responsible parties ac-
 7 countable for human rights violations, including the use
 8 of chemical weapons, through efforts such as—

1 (1) requiring the Government of Syria to allow
2 unfettered access to humanitarian organizations and
3 agencies so the civilian population receives needed
4 assistance, without discrimination;

5 (2) engaging in forceful diplomacy involving the
6 international community and the United Nations to
7 advance a negotiated settlement, including mobi-
8 lizing all internal and external parties to participate
9 urgently and constructively in the Geneva process
10 and other negotiations and regional arrangements
11 with the League of Arab States and the Organiza-
12 tion for Islamic Cooperation;

13 (3) seeking to strengthen and coordinate multi-
14 lateral sanctions targeted against the assets of
15 President Bashar al-Assad and others who may be
16 involved in ordering or perpetrating crimes under
17 international law;

18 (4) investigating and prosecuting crimes against
19 humanity and other crimes under international law,
20 including appropriately timed International Criminal
21 Court referral of the situation in Syria to ensure ac-
22 countability for the use of chemical weapons and
23 crimes against humanity;

24 (5) working with member states of the Chem-
25 ical Weapons Convention to collectively determine an

1 appropriate response to prevent the deployment and
2 use of weapons of mass destruction, including urging
3 the Government of Syria to become a signatory to
4 the Chemical Weapons Convention and formulating
5 a plan to place Syria's chemical weapons stockpile
6 under international control and supervision;

7 (6) working with the international community
8 to establish a Syrian war crimes tribunal; and

9 (7) enabling United States courts to investigate
10 and prosecute crimes against humanity and other
11 crimes under international law committed in Syria,
12 under the principle of extra-territorial jurisdiction,
13 and to encourage other nations to do the same.

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