

Saudi-American Forum



SAF Item of Interest

December 19, 2003

Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003

Editor's Note:

The following information about the Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003 was taken from Thomas - U.S. Congress Information on the Internet, which contains online records of legislative information.

To impact this legislative initiative, visit the Saudi-American Forum's Action Center to contact your congressman. Also, discuss the Saudi Arabia Accountability Act on the Saudi-U.S. Relations Information Service Discussion Forum.

Executive Summary

The Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003 was introduced by Senator Arlen Specter (R - PA) on November 18, 2003. It was later introduced in the House on November 21, 2003. This bill seeks to place sanctions on Saudi Arabia unless the President makes a certification that Saudi Arabia is making a maximum effort to fight terrorism. If a certification is not made, according to the bill, the President should take the following actions:

- Prohibit export to Saudi Arabia of any defense articles or services listed on the Arms Export Control Act.
- Prohibit export to Saudi Arabia of any items listed on the Commerce Control List (these are materials that have both economic and military uses).
- Restrict travel of Saudi diplomats to a 25-radius of the city in which their offices are located (would apply to the Saudi Embassy in DC, the Saudi UN mission in New York, and the Saudi Consulates in Houston and Los Angeles).

However, the President is not required to impose sanctions on Saudi Arabia if he certifies that Saudi Arabia is fully cooperating with the United States in investigating and preventing terrorist attacks. In addition, sanctions would not be imposed if it were certified that Saudi Arabia has permanently closed all Saudi-based terror organizations and has ended any funding or other support by the kingdom's government for any offshore terror organizations.

In the bill, offshore terror organizations are defined as "charities, schools, and any other organization or institution outside of Saudi Arabia that train, incite, encourage, or in any other way aid and abet terrorism anywhere in the world." In other words, a religious school or

madrasah that incites its students to terror would be defined as a terrorist organization for the purposes of this bill. The term Saudi-based terror organizations is defined as the same types of organizations located within the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Even if the President has not made the above certifications, he may waive the application of the sanctions against Saudi Arabia if he determines that it is in the national security interest of the United States to do so.

Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003

Senate - General Information

- **Senate bill number:** S.1888.
- **Sponsor:** Senator Arlen Specter, (R - PA)
- **Bill status:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations on November 18, 2003.
- **Committees:** Senate Foreign Relations
- **Co-Sponsors:**
 - Senator Evan Bayh (D - IN)
 - Senator Susan M. Collins (R - ME)
 - Senator Bob Graham (D - FL)
 - Senator Lindsey O. Graham (R - SC)
 - Senator Charles E. Schumer (D - NY)
 - Senator Ron Wyden (D - OR)

House - General Information

- **House bill number:** H.R. 3643
- **Sponsor :** Representative Anthony D. Weiner (D - NY-9th)
- **Bill status:** Referred to House Committee on International Relations on November 21, 2003.
- **Committees:** House International Relations
- **Co-Sponsors:**
 - Representative Robert E. Andrews (D - NJ-1st)
 - Representative Shelley Berkley (D - NV-1st)
 - Representative Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (D - GA-2nd)
 - Representative Dennis A. Cardoza (D - CA-18th)
 - Representative Joseph Crowley (D - NY-7th)
 - Representative Peter Deutch (D - FL-20th)
 - Representative Rahm Emanuel (D - IL-5th)
 - Representative Mike Ferguson (R - NJ-7th)
 - Representative Mark Foley (R - FL-16th)
 - Representative Barney Frank (D - MA-4th)
 - Representative Scott Garrett (R - NJ-5th)
 - Representative Baron P. Hill (D - IN-9th)
 - Representative Steve Israel (D - NY-2nd)
 - Representative Carolyn B. Maloney (D - NY-14th)

- Representative Edward J. Markey (D - MA-7th)
- Representative Robert T. Matsui (D - CA-5th)
- Representative Carolyn McCarthy (D - NY-4th)
- Representative Michael R. McNulty (D - NY-21st)
- Representative Jerrold Nadler (D - NY-8th)
- Representative Bobby L. Rush (D - IL-1st)
- Representative Max Sandlin (D - TX-1st)
- Representative Ted Strickland (D - OH-6th)
- Representative Ellen O. Tauscher (D - CA-10th)
- Representative Henry A. Waxman (D - CA-30th)

Below is the text of the Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003, which was entered into the Congressional record:

A BILL

To halt Saudi support for institutions that fund, train, incite, encourage, or in any other way aid and abet terrorism, and to secure full Saudi cooperation in the investigation of terrorist incidents.

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 'Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) mandates that all states 'refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts', take 'the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts', and 'deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts'.
- (2) The Council on Foreign Relations concluded in an October 2002 report on terrorist financing that '[f]or years, individuals and charities based in Saudi Arabia have been the most important source of funds for al-Qaeda, and for years, Saudi officials have turned a blind eye to this problem'.
- (3) The Middle East Media Research Institute concluded in a July 3, 2003, report on Saudi support for Palestinian terrorists that 'for decades, the royal family of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been the main financial supporter of Palestinian groups fighting Israel'. The report notes specifically that Saudi -sponsored organizations have funneled over \$4,000,000,000 to finance the Palestinian intifada that began in September 2000.
- (4) Much of this Saudi money has been directed to Hamas and to the families of suicide bombers, directly funding and rewarding suicide bombers. In December 2000, former Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas wrote to the Saudis to complain about their support for Hamas.

- (5) The New York Times, citing United States and Israeli sources, reported on September 17, 2003, that at least 50 percent of the current operating budget of Hamas comes from 'people in Saudi Arabia'.
- (6) Many Saudi -funded religious institutions and the literature they distribute teach a message of hate and intolerance that provides an ideological basis for anti-Western terrorism. The effects of these teachings are evidenced by the fact that Osama bin Laden himself and 15 of the 19 September 11th hijackers were Saudi citizens.
- (7) After the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers housing complex at Dahrhan, Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 United States Air Force personnel and wounded approximately 400 people, the Government of Saudi Arabia refused to allow United States officials to question individuals held in detention by the Saudis in connection with the attack.
- (8) During an October 2002 hearing on financing of terrorism before the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, the Undersecretary for Enforcement of the Department of the Treasury testified that the Government of Saudi Arabia had taken only 'baby steps' toward stemming the financing of terrorist activities.
- (9) During a July 2003 hearing on terrorism before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security of the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, David Aufhauser, General Counsel of the Treasury Department, stated that Saudi Arabia is, in many cases, the 'epicenter' of financing for terrorism.
- (10) A joint committee of the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives issued a report on July 24, 2003, that quotes various United States Government personnel who complained that the Saudis refused to cooperate in the investigation of Osama bin Laden and his network both before and after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
- (11) There are indications that, since the May 12, 2003, suicide bombings in Riyadh, the Government of Saudi Arabia is making a more serious effort to combat terrorism.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

- (1) it is imperative that the Government of Saudi Arabia immediately and unconditionally--
 - (A) provide complete, unrestricted, and unobstructed cooperation to the United States, including the unsolicited sharing of relevant intelligence in a consistent and timely fashion, in the investigation of groups and individuals that are suspected of financing, supporting, plotting, or committing an act of terror against United States citizens anywhere in the world, including within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
 - (B) permanently close all charities, schools, or other organizations or institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that fund, train, incite, encourage, or in any other way aid and abet terrorism anywhere in the world (hereafter in this Act referred to as 'Saudi -based terror organizations'), including by means of providing support for the families of individuals who have committed acts of terrorism;
 - (C) end funding or other support by the Government of Saudi Arabia for charities, schools, and any other organizations or institutions outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that train, incite, encourage, or in any other way aid and abet terrorism anywhere in the world (hereafter in this Act referred to as 'offshore terror organizations'), including by means of

providing support for the families of individuals who have committed acts of terrorism;
and

(D) block all funding from private Saudi citizens and entities to any Saudi -based terror organization or offshore terrorism organization; and

(2) the President, in deciding whether to make the certification under section 4, should judge whether the Government of Saudi Arabia has continued and sufficiently expanded the efforts to combat terrorism that it redoubled after the May 12, 2003, bombing in Riyadh.

SEC. 4. SANCTIONS.

(a) RESTRICTIONS ON EXPORTS AND DIPLOMATIC TRAVEL- Unless the President makes the certification described in subsection (c), the President shall take the following actions:

(1) Prohibit the export to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and prohibit the issuance of a license for the export to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, of—

(A) any defense articles or defense services on the United States Munitions List under section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778) for which special export controls are warranted under such Act (22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.); and

(B) any item identified on the Commerce Control List maintained under part 774 of title 15, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) Restrict travel of Saudi diplomats assigned to Washington, District of Columbia, New York, New York, the Saudi Consulate General in Houston, or the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles to a 25-mile radius of Washington, District of Columbia, New York, New York, the Saudi Consulate General in Houston, or the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles, respectively.

(b) WAIVER- The President may waive the application of subsection (a) if the President—

(1) determines that it is in the national security interest of the United States to do so; and

(2) submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains the reasons for such determination.

(c) CERTIFICATION- The President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a certification of any determination made by the President after the date of the enactment of this Act that the Government of Saudi Arabia—

(1) is fully cooperating with the United States in investigating and preventing terrorist attacks;

(2) has permanently closed all Saudi -based terror organizations;

(3) has ended any funding or other support by the Government of Saudi Arabia for any offshore terror organization; and

(4) has exercised maximum efforts to block all funding from private Saudi citizens and entities to offshore terrorist organizations.

SEC. 5. REPORT.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT- Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 12 months thereafter until the President makes the certification described in section 4(c), the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the progress made by the Government of Saudi Arabia toward meeting the conditions described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 4(c).

(b) FORM- The report submitted under subsection (a) shall be in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 6. DEFINITION OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

In this Act, the term 'appropriate congressional committees' means the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives.

Related SAF/SUSRIS Articles:

- State's Armitage Applauds Saudi Arabia's Anti-Terrorism Efforts
- "Riyadh: Rooting Out Al Qaeda," by Edward S. Walker and Wyche Fowler
- "Saudi Officials Take on Challenges in the Media"
- "Saudis Reject Bin Laden and Terrorism," by Dr. James J. Zogby
- "Saudi Government Counterterrorism - Counter Extremism Actions," by Anthony H. Cordesman
- "Congressional 9/11 Report Missing Pages: Saudis Ask for Full Disclosure"
- "Common Enemy: U.S. and Saudi Arabia Unite Against Terrorists," by John Duke Anthony
- "President Bush Praises Saudi Arabian Efforts in the War on Terrorism"
- Press Briefing on the War on Terrorism, Statement of Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Policy Advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah
- "Saudi Bombings Work Against Al Qaeda," by Wyche Fowler and Edward S. Walker
- Saudi Report: Initiatives and Actions Taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Financial Area to Combat Terrorism
- "FBI lauds Kingdom's Cooperation," by *Arab News*
- "The State of Saudi-U.S. Cooperation on Terrorism: Facts and Falsehoods in Context," by John Duke Anthony
- "Saudi Arabia Announces Counter-Terrorism Measures"
- "Saudi Arabia and the United States: Terrorists Seek to Drive Wedge Between Two Long-time Allies," by William Tracy

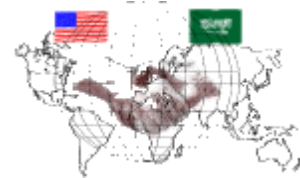
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The Saudi-American Forum is an information service designed to provide you timely information -- background and current issues - - impacting the Saudi-U.S. relationship.



The Forum is a resource for Americans who value the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia and who want to act in response to erroneous and misleading depictions of the relationship in the media and elsewhere. The Forum is a vehicle for stakeholders in the Saudi-U.S. relationship to contribute their experiences and their ideas and opinions on the issues of the day.

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Thank you for your support of the Saudi-U.S. relationship and the Saudi-American Forum.