

THE PROTECT AGAINST CONFLICT BY TURKEY (PACT) ACT: THE SMART RESPONSE TO TURKEY'S ONSLAUGHT IN SYRIA

The PACT Act, authored by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot L. Engel and Ranking Member Michael McCaul, holds Turkey accountable for its brutal invasion of northern Syria. H.R. 4695 imposes tough, but targeted sanctions against Turkey, and highlights the negative consequences of Turkey's invasion and President Trump's decision to step back and let it happen. Most of the sanctions would not be lifted until Turkey withdraws from northern Syria. The bill also requires concrete strategies from the Administration for combatting ISIS, protecting Syrian Kurdish communities, an analysis of human rights violations committed by Turkish forces as well as a refugee program designation for Syrians who partnered with or worked directly for the U.S. in Syria.

Sanctions Include:

Mandatory Asset Freeze and Visa Ban Against Senior Officials

- Minister of National Defense, Chief of General Staff of Turkish military, and Commander of Turkish 2nd Army, which has led the Syrian incursion.
- Minister of Treasury and Finance (Erdogan's son-in-law).
- Additional senior Turkish defense officials involved in the invasion of Syria and anyone committing human rights abuses.

Stopping All Arms Transfers that Turkey Could Use in Syria

- Prohibition of the transfer of U.S. defense items to Turkey if they could be used in Syria.
- Block use of the emergency provision of Arms Export Control Act (AECA) to prevent President Trump from getting around congressional holds on arms sales to Turkey.
- Secondary sanctions against any foreign person who provides arms to Turkey if they could be used in Syria.

Targeted Financial Sanctions

- Sanctions on Halkbank, a Turkish bank with ties to President Erdogan, and additional Turkish banks facilitating transactions for the Turkish military's operations in Syria.

Termination: The financial sanctions terminate only after Turkey halts attacks against the SDF. Termination of the rest of the sanctions additionally requires 1) Turkish forces to withdraw from Syria; and 2) Turkey not hindering counter-terrorism operations against ISIS.

Additional sanctions: Requires the Administration to impose CAATSA Section 231 sanctions against Turkey within 30 days for its purchase of the Russian S-400 air and missile defense system.

Refugee Program Designation: Requires the administration to designate, as Priority 2 refugees of special humanitarian concern, Syrians (including Syrian Kurds) who partnered with or worked for the U.S. government, U.S. based media or NGOs, or implementing organizations to facilitate safe resettlement in the U.S.

Reports/plans to address national security threats and humanitarian consequences caused by the Administration's decision:

- A plan to ensure that ISIS detainees and families held in Syria remain under proper custody, in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards, and in a manner that does not threaten United States security interests.
- A report on the impact that the Turkish invasion is having on counterterrorism operations in Syria and a plan for how to adapt counter-ISIS operations.
- A strategy to prevent the resurgence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria.
- A report that describes the consequences of civilian harm occurring during Turkey's military invasion of northern Syria, including violations of the law of armed conflict and gross violations of human rights.
- A plan for how the United States will assist Syrian Kurdish and other communities affected by the Turkish military operation.
- A report on the net worth and assets of President Erdogan.