Since September

11, the bar for assistance in our war

against terrorism has been raised, and

the Syrian Government is no longer entitled

to a free pass. The United States

must no longer allow Syria to get away

with taking with the right hand what

it gives with the left.

Unfortunately, the Government of

Syria remains an obstacle to peace in

Iraq, settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict—indeed, Syria has

rebuffed repeated Israeli offers to make

peace between Israel and Syria—democratic

development and sovereignty for

the Lebanese people, regional security,

and the protection of human rights of

the Syrian people themselves.

There is no doubt that Syria actively

supports international terrorism. The

evidence supporting this contention is

overwhelming:

The U.S. State Department has certified

Syria on its list of state sponsors

of terrorism continuously since the

1970s. Syria’s dubious company on this

list includes Hussein’s Iraq, Iran,

Libya, North Korea, and Communist

Cuba.

Syria provides material support and

safe haven to numerous international

terrorist groups, including Hezbollah,

Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation

of Palestine, and Islamic Jihad.

Syria allows terrorist groups to

maintain training camps on Syrian

soil. Indeed, in October, after a terrorist

bombing in Haifa, Israel retaliated

against a known Islamic Jihad

terrorist training camp near Damascus.

Syrian-controlled southern Lebanon

is a haven for anti-Israel terrorists and

a staging ground for terrorist rocket

attacks against Northern Israel.

Syria has facilitated the transfer of

military equipment from Iran to terrorists

operating in Syria-controlled

Lebanon.

Syria maintains a robust chemical

weapons program, raising the risk that

Syria could transfer such weapons to

terrorists.

In addition to Syria’s long-time efforts

to support the deadly aims of

international terrorist groups, its government

has played a decidedly

unhelpful role in regional security.

Most notably, the Syrian Government

illegally collaborated with the Hussein

regime to circumvent United Nations

resolutions and has worked to undermine

Iraqi democracy in the wake of

the liberation of that country.

Although Syria voted for the recent

U.N. resolution on Iraq, ostensibly expressing

its support for the reconstruction

of a free and democratic Iraq,

Syria has used nearly every other opportunity

to undermine the American led

coalition’s efforts to liberate the

people of that country from the brutal

reign of Saddam Hussein. Furthermore,

recent media reports indicate that

Syria may have accepted and hidden

Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction

before the U.S.-led invasion.

In addition, there are credible reports

that Syria provided material support

to Iraqi troops during the war and currently

provides safe haven to former

Hussein regime officials and loyalists.

U.S. investigators have located $3 billion

hidden by the Hussein regime in

Syrian banks, and Syria has refused to

return this money to its rightful owners:

the people of Iraq.

During the 1990s, Syria repeatedly defied

U.N. sanctions against Iraq by participating

in enormous black market

purchases of oil from the Saddam Hussein

regime. The proceeds from these

sales directly supported Hussein’s military

regime and opulent lifestyle.

Syria has not acted sufficiently to

curb cross-border movement of foreign

terrorists, including a significant number

of Syrian nationals, into Iraq. Indeed,

in some circumstances, the Syrian

Government appears to have facilitated

their migration to that country;

Syrian passports have been found in

the possession of international terrorists

arrested by the U.S. military

there. These terrorists seek to wage

jihad against American troops and undermine

democracy in Iraq and

throughout the Middle East.

In addition to Syria’s unhelpful polices

in Iraq, it remains a spoiler for

the development of peace and democracy

in Lebanon, a country it has forcibly

occupied for decades. Its military

occupation of Lebanon undermines

Lebanese efforts to create a sovereign

democratic state and furthers instability

in the region. Syria, a dictatorship,

wields considerable political control

in Lebanon, thereby distorting

Lebanon’s officially democratic process

and making that country a de facto

puppet state of the Syrian Government.

Unconditional U.S. engagement of

Syria has failed to encourage true moderation

in Damascus; a new approach is

necessary to encourage the Syrians to

cooperate or face the consequences.

Other Arab governments who say one

thing and do another—such as Egypt—

would be wise to pay attention to the

congressional debate about, and support

for, the Syrian Accountability

Act.

I believe the Syrian Accountability

Act will give the administration the

tools it needs to highlight to the Syrian

Government the risk of choosing

the wrong side in the global war

against terrorism. The Syrian Government

has an opportunity to reform

itself, to provide its people with the

economic and political freedoms they

seek, to end its support for murderous

terrorist organizations, and to become

a proponent of peace in the Middle

East.

If Syria’s leaders decide to embark

on a moderate and peaceful path, it

will find the United States to be a benevolent

and helpful ally. But if it continues

to support international terrorism,

Syria’s leaders will find themselves

international pariahs, with

fewer resources or friends to help them

maintain their increasingly tenuous

grip on power.