

## **Sanctions Against Syria Possibly Lifted Next Year**

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The United States Syria Accountability Act, which permits sanctions against Damascus, will probably become a dead letter by next year thanks to the improvement in relations between Washington and Damascus, said a July 28 editorial in the pro-government website Syria Steps.

The act passed into law by the US Congress in 2003 was aimed at ending Syria's alleged support for terrorism, its development of weapons of mass destruction and its presence in Lebanon.

Although the new US administration has not abolished the law, it has relaxed the application of sanctions against Syria by allowing Damascus, for instance, to import US aircraft equipment, wrote Hiam Ali, the website's editor-in-chief.

Washington recently renewed for another year economic sanctions in force since 2004 under the act but US officials said recently they would seek sanction waivers as a sign of goodwill towards Damascus.

Ali said that many voices inside the US Congress were favourable to the lifting of the sanctions altogether adding, however, that this step would depend on the development of political relations between the two nations.

The author concluded that judging from the direction that bilateral relations were taking, it was likely that sanctions would not be renewed next year.

As a sign that relations were improving, Ali said American banks were starting to send officers to Syria to study the possibility of financial cooperation between the two countries.

She added that it was not in Washington's interest to continue boycotting Syria.

On July 30, Imad Sabouni, the Syrian minister of communications and technology, told the same website that the US decision to allow Syria to import high-tech products was a big step for the development of the information technology and telecommunication sectors in Syria.

**Focus:** [Syria Press Monitor](#)

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