

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5037

To strengthen the role of the United States with respect to the Indian Ocean region, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. KAINE, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. COONS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To strengthen the role of the United States with respect to the Indian Ocean region, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Indian Ocean Region
5 Strategic Review Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
9 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
10 mittees” means—

1 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations
2 and the Committee on Armed Services of the
3 Senate; and

4 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and
5 the Committee on Armed Services of the House
6 of Representatives.

7 (2) INDIAN OCEAN REGION.—The term “Indian
8 Ocean region” means the Indian Ocean, including
9 the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and the lit-
10 toral areas surrounding the Indian Ocean, including
11 the East Coast of Africa.

12 (3) INDIAN OCEAN REGION COUNTRY.—The
13 term “Indian Ocean region country” means any
14 country located within or surrounding the Indian
15 Ocean region.

16 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

17 Congress finds the following:

18 (1) The United States has vitally important po-
19 litical, economic, and security interests in the Indian
20 Ocean region, and the United States is uniquely po-
21 sitioned to capitalize on opportunities that advance
22 those interests.

23 (2) The United States needs to engage and co-
24 operate with partners in the Indo-Pacific region, in-
25 cluding India, Japan, Australia, and island countries

1 located within the region, to bolster regional govern-
2 ance, to increase sustainable economic development,
3 and to strengthen cooperation on security challenges,
4 such as threats to freedom of navigation, and envi-
5 ronmental disasters.

6 (3) The United States must work to better un-
7 derstand the political, security, economic, and envi-
8 ronmental issues faced by the governments of Indian
9 Ocean region countries.

10 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

11 It is the policy of the United States with respect to
12 the Indian Ocean region, as part of the broader strategy
13 of the United States for Indo-Pacific engagement, to
14 strengthen engagement with Indian Ocean region coun-
15 tries (including with the governments, civil society, aca-
16 demia, and private sectors of those countries) and to en-
17 hance meaningful diplomatic, security, and economic rela-
18 tions with allies and partners of the United States in the
19 Indian Ocean region by—

20 (1) promoting cohesive political ties between the
21 United States and Indian Ocean region countries
22 through active participation in regional organiza-
23 tions and strengthening bilateral diplomatic relations
24 with those allies and partners;

1 (2) continuing to strengthen bilateral security
2 relationships between the United States and part-
3 ners in the Indian Ocean region, including India, for
4 the purpose of regularizing security cooperation, by
5 building upon foundational agreements concerning
6 intelligence sharing, military communication, and
7 naval cooperation;

8 (3) engaging with India to better understand
9 and operationalize economic and political opportuni-
10 ties across the Indian Ocean region;

11 (4) enhancing economic connectivity and com-
12 mercial exchange between the United States and In-
13 dian Ocean region countries;

14 (5) maintaining the freedom of navigation of
15 the international waters within the Indian Ocean re-
16 gion in a manner consistent with international law;

17 (6) cooperating with the governments of Indian
18 Ocean region countries on security challenges, in-
19 cluding issues relating to piracy and illegal fishing;

20 (7) supporting the ability of such governments,
21 and of nongovernmental organizations within the In-
22 dian Ocean region, to respond to environmental dis-
23 asters and work to mitigate potential future disas-
24 ters with resilient infrastructure;

1 (8) facilitating cooperation between the United
2 States and allies and partners of the United States
3 in the Indian Ocean region to build capacity in mari-
4 time security and maritime domain awareness;

5 (9) promoting cooperation with allies of the
6 United States in the Indo-Pacific region (including
7 Japan and Australia), major defense partners of the
8 United States (including India), and North Atlantic
9 Treaty Organization allies (including the United
10 Kingdom and France) to support a rules-based order
11 in the region; and

12 (10) understanding resources and costs re-
13 quired for the United States to effectively engage
14 diplomatically and economically in the Indian Ocean
15 region.

16 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN RELATING**
17 **TO INDIAN OCEAN REGION.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
19 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,
20 in coordination with the Secretary of Defense and the Ad-
21 ministrators of the United States Agency for International
22 Development, shall submit to the appropriate congress-
23 sional committees a multi-year strategy and implementa-
24 tion plan for United States engagements and posture to

1 support the interests of the United States with respect to
2 the Indian Ocean region.

3 (b) ELEMENTS OF STRATEGY.—The strategy re-
4 quired by subsection (a) shall include the following:

5 (1) An identification of the political, economic,
6 and security goals and opportunities of the United
7 States in the Indian Ocean region.

8 (2) An explanation of the political, economic,
9 and security goals of Indian Ocean region countries
10 and a detailed description of areas with respect to
11 which those goals align with the goals of the United
12 States.

13 (3) A list that—

14 (A) details the political, economic, and se-
15 curity efforts of the People’s Republic of China
16 with respect to the Indian Ocean region, par-
17 ticularly with respect to the engagement by the
18 People’s Republic of China with each Indian
19 Ocean region country; and

20 (B) includes an assessment of any efforts
21 of the People’s Republic of China to expand its
22 military presence in the Indian Ocean region,
23 including through efforts to secure agreements
24 to host People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)
25 bases and acquire commercial port facilities.

1 (4) A description and analysis of challenges, in-
2 cluding countries and specific projects, to engage-
3 ment by the United States with Indian Ocean region
4 countries as a result of—

5 (A) disparate policy goals across the de-
6 partments and agencies of the United States
7 Government; and

8 (B) disparate definitions of the term “In-
9 dian Ocean region” across the Department of
10 State, the Department of Defense, and the
11 United States Agency for International Devel-
12 opment.

13 (5) A list that details efforts to improve co-
14 operation between the United States and other mem-
15 bers of the Quadrilateral Dialogue (commonly re-
16 ferred to as the “Quad”), namely, Australia, India,
17 and Japan, through coordination among those coun-
18 tries with respect to diplomacy and development pri-
19 orities, joint military exercises and operations, and
20 other activities that promote and balance the polit-
21 ical, economic, and security interests of the United
22 States with respect to Indian Ocean region coun-
23 tries.

24 (6) An overview—

1 (A) of efforts to support the economic
2 connectivity and development of island coun-
3 tries located within the Indian Ocean region, in-
4 cluding through the United States-India-Japan
5 Trilateral Infrastructure Working Group and
6 the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, and other ef-
7 forts to expand and enhance connectivity across
8 the Indo-Pacific region (including with the
9 countries of Southeast Asia), that maintain
10 high standards of investment and support for
11 civil society and people-to-people connectivity;
12 and

13 (B) that shall include a description of any
14 resources or policy tools required to enhance the
15 ability of the United States to support high-
16 quality infrastructure resiliency projects in
17 those countries.

18 (7) A description of how the United States may
19 engage with regional intergovernmental organiza-
20 tions and multilateral organizations, including the
21 Indian Ocean Rim Association, to promote the polit-
22 ical, economic, and security goals of the United
23 States in the Indian Ocean region.

24 (8) A description of how the United States may
25 facilitate cooperation between Indian Ocean region

1 countries (including with the governments, civil soci-
2 ety, academia, and private sectors of those coun-
3 tries) and Taiwan through Taiwan's New South-
4 bound Policy.

5 (9) A review of the diplomatic posture of the
6 United States in the Indian Ocean region, including
7 the following:

8 (A) An assessment of the diplomatic en-
9 gagement by the United States with Indian
10 Ocean region countries without a permanent
11 United States embassy or diplomatic mission.

12 (B) An assessment of means to improve
13 cooperation by the United States with the
14 Maldives, Seychelles, and Comoros.

15 (C) An assessment of the sufficiency of
16 United States diplomatic personnel and facili-
17 ties available in the Indian Ocean region to
18 carry out the policy described in section 4.

19 (D) A description of any resources re-
20 quired to fill identified gaps with respect to
21 such diplomatic posture.

22 (E) A description of the bilateral and mul-
23 tilateral diplomatic goals of the Department of
24 State that the Secretary of State considers nec-

1 essary to carry out the policy described in sec-
2 tion 4.

3 (F) A description of the diplomatic strat-
4 egy to deter the efforts described in paragraph
5 (3)(B).

6 (10) A review of the agreements entered into
7 between the United States and Indian Ocean region
8 countries for the purpose of facilitating the military
9 operations of the United States pursuant to bilateral
10 and multilateral agreements and a description of any
11 efforts to expand naval and coast guard cooperation
12 between the United States and India and other In-
13 dian Ocean region countries through the negotiation
14 of additional agreements.

15 (11) A strategy for strengthening security co-
16 operation between the United States and partners in
17 the Indian Ocean region, including through the pro-
18 vision of security assistance, which shall include the
19 following:

20 (A) A summary of the security priorities,
21 objectives, and actions of each prospective re-
22 cipient country.

23 (B) A description of the means by which
24 the United States may support those security
25 priorities, objectives, and actions while pro-

1 moting the political, economic, and security
 2 goals of the United States in the Indian Ocean
 3 region.

4 (C) An assessment of the capabilities,
 5 training, and resources needed for Indian
 6 Ocean region countries to address shared chal-
 7 lenges in the region.

8 (c) INCLUSION IN ANOTHER STRATEGY.—The strat-
 9 egy required by subsection (a) may be submitted to the
 10 appropriate congressional committees as a part of any
 11 other strategy relating to the Indo-Pacific region.

12 (d) REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than
 13 1 year after the date on which the Secretary of State sub-
 14 mits the strategy required by subsection (a), and 1 year
 15 thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit to the ap-
 16 propriate congressional committees a report on progress
 17 made toward implementing the strategy.

18 **SEC. 6. REPORTS BY UNITED STATES-CHINA ECONOMIC**
 19 **AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION.**

20 (a) MODIFICATION.—Section 1238(c)(2)(E) of the
 21 Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for
 22 Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002(c)(2)(E)) is amend-
 23 ed—

1 (1) by inserting “, including in the Indian
2 Ocean region” after “deployments of the People’s
3 Republic of China military”; and

4 (2) by adding at the end the following new sen-
5 tence: “In this subparagraph, the term ‘Indian
6 Ocean region’ means the Indian Ocean, including
7 the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and the lit-
8 toral areas surrounding the Indian Ocean, including
9 the East Coast of Africa.”.

10 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by sub-
11 section (a) shall apply with respect to each report under
12 section 1238(c) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense
13 Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C.
14 7002(c)) required to be submitted on or after the date
15 of the enactment of this Act.

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