

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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**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 ministrator of the United States Agency for International  
22 Development, shall submit to the appropriate congres-  
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           (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.