

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8378

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

---

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 14, 2024

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself and Mr. ISSA) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

---

## 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. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The United States has vitally important po-  
9 litical, economic, and security interests in the Indian  
10 Ocean region, and the United States is uniquely po-

1       sitioned to capitalize on opportunities that advance  
2       such interests.

3               (2) The United States needs to engage and co-  
4       operate with partners in the Indo-Pacific region, in-  
5       cluding India, Japan, Australia, and island countries  
6       located within such region, to bolster regional gov-  
7       ernance, to increase sustainable economic  
8       connectivity and development, and to strengthen co-  
9       operation on security challenges such as threats to  
10      freedom of navigation and environmental disasters.

11              (3) The United States must work to better un-  
12      derstand the environmental, economic, security, and  
13      political issues faced by the Governments of Indian  
14      Ocean region countries.

15   **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

16      It is the policy of the United States with respect to  
17      the Indian Ocean region, as part of the broader Indo-Pa-  
18      cific engagement strategy of the United States, to  
19      strengthen engagement with Indian Ocean region coun-  
20      tries (including with the governments, civil society, aca-  
21      demia, and private sectors of such countries) and to en-  
22      hance meaningful diplomatic, security, and economic rela-  
23      tions with allies and partners of the United States in the  
24      Indian Ocean region, by the following:

1           (1) Promoting cohesive political ties between  
2 the United States and Indian Ocean region countries  
3 through active participation in regional organiza-  
4 tions and strengthening bilateral diplomatic relations  
5 with such allies and partners.

6           (2) Continuing to build the bilateral security re-  
7 lationship between the United States and India, for  
8 the purpose of regularizing security cooperation by  
9 building upon foundational agreements concerning  
10 intelligence sharing, military communication, and  
11 naval cooperation.

12           (3) Engaging with India to better understand  
13 and operationalize economic and political opportuni-  
14 ties across the Indian Ocean region.

15           (4) Enhancing economic connectivity and com-  
16 mercial exchange between the United States and In-  
17 dian Ocean region countries.

18           (5) Ensuring the freedom of navigation by pro-  
19 tecting trade routes and shipping lanes within the  
20 Indian Ocean region for all countries to enjoy  
21 unimpeded access in a manner consistent with inter-  
22 national law.

23           (6) Cooperating with the governments of Indian  
24 Ocean region countries on security challenges, in-  
25 cluding issues relating to piracy and illegal fishing.

1           (7) Supporting the ability of such governments,  
2           and of nongovernmental organizations within the In-  
3           dian Ocean region, to respond to environmental dis-  
4           asters and work to mitigate potential future disas-  
5           ters with resilient infrastructure.

6           (8) Facilitating cooperation between the United  
7           States and allies and partners of the United States  
8           in the Indian Ocean region to build capacity in mari-  
9           time security and maritime domain awareness.

10          (9) Promoting cooperation with United States  
11          allies in the Indo-Pacific region (including Japan  
12          and Australia), major defense partners (including  
13          India), and NATO allies (including the United King-  
14          dom and France), to support a rules-based order in  
15          such region.

16          (10) Understanding resources and costs re-  
17          quired for the United States to effectively engage  
18          diplomatically and economically in the Indian Ocean  
19          region.

20 **SEC. 4. STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN RELATING**  
21 **TO INDIAN OCEAN REGION.**

22          (a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the  
23          date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,  
24          in coordination with the Secretary of Defense and the Ad-  
25          ministrators of the United States Agency for International

1 Development, shall submit to the appropriate congres-  
2 sional committees a multi-year strategy and implementa-  
3 tion plan for United States engagements and posture to  
4 support the interests of the United States with respect to  
5 the Indian Ocean region.

6 (b) MATTERS.—The strategy under subsection (a)  
7 shall include the following:

8 (1) An identification of the political, economic,  
9 and security goals and opportunities of the United  
10 States in the Indian Ocean region.

11 (2) An explanation of the political, economic,  
12 and security goals of Indian Ocean region countries  
13 and a detailed description of areas with respect to  
14 which such interests align with the goals of the  
15 United States.

16 (3) A list that details the economic and political  
17 efforts of the People’s Republic of China with re-  
18 spect to the Indian Ocean region, particularly with  
19 respect to the engagement by the People’s Republic  
20 of China with each country located within the Indian  
21 Ocean region.

22 (4) A description and analysis of challenges, in-  
23 cluding countries and specific projects, to the en-  
24 gagement with Indian Ocean region countries as a  
25 result of—

1 (A) disparate policy goals across the de-  
2 partments and agencies of the United States  
3 Government; and

4 (B) disparate definitions of the term “In-  
5 dian Ocean region” across the Department of  
6 State, Department of Defense, and United  
7 States Agency for International Development.

8 (5) A list that details efforts to improve co-  
9 operation between the United States and Australia,  
10 India, and Japan (commonly referred to as the  
11 “Quadrilateral Dialogue” or “Quad” and referred to  
12 as such in this section), through coordination be-  
13 tween members of the Quad with respect to diplo-  
14 macy and development priorities, joint military exer-  
15 cises and operations, and other activities that pro-  
16 mote and balance the political, economic, and secu-  
17 rity interests of the United States with respect to  
18 Indian Ocean region countries.

19 (6) An overview of efforts to support the eco-  
20 nomic connectivity and development of island coun-  
21 tries located within the Indian Ocean region, includ-  
22 ing through the United States-India-Japan Tri-  
23 lateral Infrastructure Working Group, the Asia-Afri-  
24 ca Growth Corridor, and other efforts to expand and  
25 enhance connectivity across the Indo-Pacific region

1 (including with the countries of Southeast Asia) that  
2 maintain high standards of investment and support  
3 for civil society and people-to-people connectivity.

4 (7) A description of how the United States may  
5 engage with regional intergovernmental organiza-  
6 tions and multilateral organizations, including the  
7 Indian Ocean Rim Association and the United Na-  
8 tions, to promote the political, economic, and secu-  
9 rity goals of the United States in the Indian Ocean  
10 region.

11 (8) A description of how the United States may  
12 facilitate cooperation between Indian Ocean region  
13 countries (including with the governments, civil soci-  
14 ety, academia, and private sectors of such countries)  
15 and Taiwan, through Taiwan's New Southbound  
16 Policy.

17 (9) A review of the diplomatic posture of the  
18 United States in the Indian Ocean region, includ-  
19 ing—

20 (A) an assessment of the diplomatic en-  
21 gagement by the United States with Indian  
22 Ocean region countries without a permanent  
23 United States embassy or diplomatic mission;

1 (B) an assessment of means by which to  
2 improve cooperation by the United States with  
3 the Maldives, the Seychelles, and Comoros;

4 (C) an assessment of the sufficiency of  
5 United States diplomatic personnel and facili-  
6 ties available in the Indian Ocean region to  
7 achieve the policy referred to in section 3;

8 (D) a description of any fiscal or personnel  
9 resources required to fill identified gaps with  
10 respect to such diplomatic posture; and

11 (E) a description of the bilateral and mul-  
12 tilateral diplomatic goals of the Department of  
13 State that the Secretary of State deems nec-  
14 essary to achieve the policy referred to in sec-  
15 tion 3.

16 (10) A review of the agreements entered into  
17 between the United States and Indian Ocean region  
18 countries for the purpose of facilitating the military  
19 operations of the United States pursuant to bilateral  
20 and multilateral agreements and a description of any  
21 efforts to expand the naval and coast guard coopera-  
22 tion of the United States with India and other In-  
23 dian Ocean region countries through the negotiation  
24 of additional agreements.



1           (11) A strategy for the provision of United  
2 States security assistance to the governments of In-  
3 dian Ocean region countries, including a summary of  
4 the security priorities, objectives, and actions of the  
5 prospective recipient country and a description of  
6 the means by which the United States may support  
7 such security priorities, objectives, and actions while  
8 promoting the political, economic, and security goals  
9 of the United States in the Indian Ocean region.

10           (12) A security assistance assessment of the ca-  
11 pabilities, training, and funding needed for countries  
12 in the region to push back against shared challenges  
13 in the region.

14           (13) A plan to expand the foreign assistance  
15 presence of the United States with respect to the  
16 governments of island countries located within the  
17 Indian Ocean region, including a description of any  
18 resources or policy tools required to expand the abil-  
19 ity of the United States to offer high-quality infra-  
20 structure resiliency projects to such countries.

21           (c) INCLUSION.—The strategy under subsection (a)  
22 may be submitted to the appropriate congressional com-  
23 mittees as a part of any other strategy relating to the  
24 Indo-Pacific region.

1 (d) REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than  
2 one year after the date on which the Secretary of State  
3 submits the strategy under subsection (a), and one year  
4 thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit to the ap-  
5 propriate congressional committees a report on progress  
6 made toward implementing the strategy.

7 **SEC. 5. MODIFICATION TO UNITED STATES-CHINA ECO-**  
8 **NOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION.**

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

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

16 (2) by adding at the end the following new sen-  
17 tence: “In this subparagraph, the term ‘Indian  
18 Ocean region’ means the Indian Ocean, including  
19 the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and the lit-  
20 toral areas surrounding the Indian Ocean.”.

21 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by sub-  
22 section (a) shall apply with respect to each report under  
23 section 1238 of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Au-  
24 thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 required to be sub-  
25 mitted on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-**  
4 **TEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional com-  
5 mittees” means—

6 (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and  
7 the Committee on Armed Services of the House  
8 of Representatives; and

9 (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations  
10 and the Committee on Armed Services of the  
11 Senate.

12 (2) **INDIAN OCEAN REGION.**—The term “Indian  
13 Ocean region” means the Indian Ocean, including  
14 the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and the lit-  
15 toral areas surrounding the Indian Ocean.

16 (3) **INDIAN OCEAN REGION COUNTRY.**—The  
17 term “Indian Ocean region country” means any  
18 country located within or surrounding the Indian  
19 Ocean region.

○