

Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee only for neglect of duty or malfeasance.

(3) **TERMINATION.**—The Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee shall terminate 90 days after the date on which the Commission submits the final report required under section 5111(e)(3).

(c) **BUSINESS MEETINGS.**—

(1) **INITIAL BUSINESS MEETING.**—Not later than 30 days after the date of the initial business meeting of the Commission under section 5101(c)(1), the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee shall hold an initial business meeting—

(A) to establish rules for the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee; and

(B) to appoint 2 members of the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee to serve as non-voting designees on the Commission in accordance with section 5101(c)(3).

(2) **SUBSEQUENT BUSINESS MEETINGS.**—After the initial business meeting of the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee is held under paragraph (1), the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee shall meet at the call of the Chairperson.

(3) **FORMAT OF BUSINESS MEETINGS.**—A business meeting of the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee may be conducted in-person, virtually, or via phone.

(4) **QUORUM REQUIRED.**—A business meeting of the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee may only be held once a quorum, established in accordance with subsection (d), is present.

(d) **QUORUM.**—A simple majority of the members of the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee present shall constitute a quorum for a business meeting.

(e) **RULES.**—The Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee may establish, with the advice of the Commission, by a majority vote, any rules for the conduct of business, in accordance with this section and other applicable law.

(f) **DUTIES.**—The Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee shall—

(1) ensure the effective and timely coordination between Federal agencies in furtherance of the purposes of this division;

(2) assist the Commission and the Native American Truth and Healing Advisory Committee in coordinating—

(A) meetings and other related public and private convenings; and

(B) the collection, organization, and preservation of information obtained from witnesses and by other Federal agencies; and

(3) ensure the timely submission to the Commission of materials, documents, testimony, and such other information as the Commission determines to be necessary to carry out the duties of the Commission.

(g) **CONSULTATION OR ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIVE AMERICANS, INDIAN TRIBES, TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS, THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATIONS.**—In carrying out the duties of the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee under subsection (f), the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee shall meaningfully consult or engage, as appropriate, in a timely manner with Native Americans, Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and Native Hawaiian organizations.

(h) **NONDISCLOSURE.**—

(1) **PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 APPLICABILITY.**—Subsection (b) of section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Privacy Act of 1974”), shall not apply to the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee.

(2) **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT APPLICABILITY.**—Records and other communications provided to, from, between, or within the Commission, the Federal Truth and Healing

Advisory Committee, the Native American Truth and Healing Advisory Committee, the Survivors Truth and Healing Subcommittee, and related agencies shall be exempt from disclosure under subsection (b)(3)(B) of section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Freedom of Information Act”).

(3) **FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT APPLICABILITY.**—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Federal Advisory Committee Act”), shall not apply to the Federal Truth and Healing Advisory Committee.

#### **TITLE LIII—GENERAL PROVISIONS**

##### **SEC. 5301. CLARIFICATION.**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) applies to cultural items relating to an Indian Boarding School or Indian Boarding School Policies, regardless of agency interpretation of applicability.

##### **SEC. 5302. BURIAL MANAGEMENT.**

Federal agencies shall permit reburial of cultural items relating to an Indian Boarding School or Indian Boarding School Policies that have been repatriated pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.), or returned to a lineal descendant, Indian Tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization by any other disinterment process, on any Federal land as agreed to by the relevant parties.

##### **SEC. 5303. CO-STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS.**

A Federal agency that carries out activities pursuant to this division or that created or controls a cemetery or burial site with remains of an individual who attended an Indian Boarding School or an Indian Boarding School may enter into a co-stewardship agreement for the management of the cemetery, burial site, or Indian Boarding School.

##### **SEC. 5304. NO RIGHT OF ACTION.**

Nothing in this division creates a private right of action to seek administrative or judicial relief.

**SA 2242.** Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 4638, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2025 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle C of title XII, add the following:

##### **SEC. 1239. PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND PROSPERITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.**—

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the “Western Balkans Democracy and Prosperity Act”.

(b) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Western Balkans countries (the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Kosovo, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia) form a pluralistic, multi-ethnic region in the heart of Europe that is critical to the peace, stability, and prosperity of that continent.

(2) Continued peace, stability, and prosperity in the Western Balkans is directly tied to the opportunities for democratic and economic advancement available to the citizens and residents of those seven countries.

(3) It is in the mutual interest of the United States and the seven countries of the Western Balkans to promote stable and sustainable economic growth and development in the region.

(4) The reforms and integration with the European Union pursued by countries in the Western Balkans have led to significant democratic and economic progress in the region.

(5) Despite economic progress, rates of poverty and unemployment in the Western Balkans remain higher than in neighboring European Union countries.

(6) Out-migration, particularly of youth, is affecting demographics in each Western Balkans country, resulting in population decline in all seven countries.

(7) Implementing critical economic and governance reforms could help enable investment and employment opportunities in the Western Balkans, especially for youth, and can provide powerful tools for economic development and for encouraging broader participation in a political process that increases trade and prosperity for all.

(8) Existing regional economic efforts, such as the Common Regional Market, the Berlin Process, and the Open Balkan Initiative, could have the potential to improve the economic conditions in the Western Balkans, while promoting inclusion and transparency.

(9) The Department of Commerce, through its Foreign Commercial Service, plays an important role in promoting and facilitating opportunities for United States trade and investment.

(10) Corruption, including among key political leaders, continues to plague the Western Balkans and represents one of the greatest impediments to further economic and political development in the region.

(11) Disinformation campaigns targeting the Western Balkans undermine the credibility of its democratic institutions, including the integrity of its elections.

(12) Vulnerability to cyberattacks or attacks on information and communication technology infrastructure increases risks to the functioning of government and the delivery of public services.

(13) The Department of State, along with other Federal agencies, plays a critical role in defending the national security interests of the United States, including by deploying cyber hunt forward teams at the request of partner nations to reinforce their cyber defenses.

(14) Securing domestic and international cyber networks and ICT infrastructure is a national security priority for the United States, which is exemplified by offices and programs across the Federal Government that support cybersecurity.

(15) Corruption and disinformation proliferate in political environments marked by autocratic control or partisan conflict.

(16) Dependence on Russian sources of fossil fuels and natural gas for the countries of the Western Balkans ties their economies and politics to the Russian Federation and inhibits their aspirations for European integration.

(17) Reducing the reliance of the Western Balkans on Russian natural gas supplies and fossil fuels is in the national interest of the United States.

(18) The growing influence of China in the Western Balkans could also have a deleterious impact on strategic competition, democracy, and economic integration with Europe.

(19) In March 2022, President Biden launched the European Democratic Resilience Initiative to bolster democratic resilience, advance anti-corruption efforts, and defend human rights in Ukraine and its neighbors in response to Russia’s war of aggression.

(20) The parliamentary and local elections held in Serbia on December 17, 2023, and their immediate aftermath are cause for

deep concern about the state of Serbia's democracy, including due to the final report of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which—

(A) found “unjust conditions” for the election;

(B) found “numerous procedural deficiencies, including inconsistent application of safeguards during voting and counting, frequent instances of overcrowding, breaches in secrecy of the vote, and numerous instances of group voting”; and

(C) asserted that “voting must be repeated” in certain polling stations.

(21) The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe also noted that Serbian officials accused primarily peaceful protestors, opposition parties, and civil society of “attempting to destabilize the government”, a concerning allegation that threatens the safety of important elements of Serbian society.

(22) Democratic countries whose values are in alignment with the United States make for stronger and more durable partnerships.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is a sense of Congress that the United States should—

(1) encourage increased trade and investment between the United States and allies and partners in the Western Balkans;

(2) expand United States assistance to regional integration efforts in the Western Balkans;

(3) strengthen and expand regional economic integration in the Western Balkans, especially enterprises owned by and employing women and youth;

(4) work with allies and partners committed to improving the rule of law, energy resource diversification, democratic and economic reform, and the reduction of poverty in the Western Balkans;

(5) increase United States trade and investment with the Western Balkans, particularly in ways that support countries' efforts—

(A) to decrease dependence on Russian energy sources and fossil fuels;

(B) to increase energy diversification, efficiency, and conservation; and

(C) to facilitate the transition to cleaner and more reliable sources of energy, including renewables, as appropriate;

(6) continue to assist in the development, within the Western Balkans, of—

(A) strong civil societies;

(B) public-private partnerships;

(C) independent media;

(D) transparent, accountable, citizen-responsive governance, including equal representation for women and youth;

(E) political stability; and

(F) modern, free-market based economies.

(7) support the expeditious accession of those Western Balkans countries that are not already members to the European Union and to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (referred to in this section as “NATO”) for countries that desire and are eligible for such membership;

(8) support—

(A) maintaining the full European Union Force (EUFOR) mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina as being in the national security interests of the United States;

(B) encouraging NATO and the European Union to review their mission mandates and posture in Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure they are playing a proactive role in establishing a safe and secure environment, particularly in the realm of defense;

(C) working within NATO to encourage contingency planning for an international military force to maintain a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially if Russia blocks reauthorization of the mission in the United Nations; and

(D) a strengthened NATO headquarters in Sarajevo;

(9) continue to support the European Union membership aspirations of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia by supporting meeting the benchmarks required for their accession;

(10) continue to support the overarching mission of the Berlin Process and locally-driven initiatives that are inclusive of all Western Balkans countries and remains aligned with the objectives and standards laid out by the European Union as requirements for accession to the European Union;

(11) continue to support the cultural heritage, and recognize the languages, of the Western Balkans;

(12) coordinate closely with the European Union, the United Kingdom, and other allies and partners on sanctions designations in Western Balkans countries and work to align efforts as much as possible to demonstrate a clear commitment to upholding democratic values;

(13) expand bilateral security cooperation with non-NATO member Western Balkans countries, particularly efforts focused on regional integration and cooperation, including through the Adriatic Charter, which was launched at Tirana on May 2, 2003;

(14) increase efforts to combat Russian malign influence campaigns and any other destabilizing or disruptive activities targeting the Western Balkans through engagement with government institutions, political stakeholders, journalists, civil society organizations, and industry leaders;

(15) develop a series of cyber resilience standards, consistent with the Enhanced Cyber Defence Policy and Readiness Action Plan endorsed at the 2014 Wales Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to expand cooperation with partners and allies, including in the Western Balkans, on cyber security and ICT infrastructure;

(16) articulate clearly and unambiguously the United States commitment to supporting democratic values and respect for international law as the sole path forward for the countries of the Western Balkans; and

(17) prioritize partnerships and programming with Western Balkan countries that demonstrate commitment toward strengthening their democracies and show respect for human rights.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) ICT.—The term “ICT” means information and communication technology.

(3) WESTERN BALKANS.—The term “Western Balkans” means the region comprised of the following countries:

(A) The Republic of Albania.

(B) Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(C) The Republic of Croatia.

(D) The Republic of Kosovo.

(E) Montenegro.

(F) The Republic of North Macedonia.

(G) The Republic of Serbia.

(4) WESTERN BALKANS COUNTRY.—The term “Western Balkans country” means any country listed in subparagraphs (A) through (G) of paragraph (3).

(e) CODIFICATION OF SANCTIONS RELATING TO THE WESTERN BALKANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each person listed or designated for the imposition of sanctions under

an executive order described in paragraph (3) as of the date of the enactment of this Act shall remain so designated, except as provided in paragraphs (4) and (5).

(2) CONTINUATION OF SANCTIONS AUTHORITIES.—Each authority to impose sanctions provided for under an executive order described in paragraph (3) shall remain in effect.

(3) EXECUTIVE ORDERS SPECIFIED.—The executive orders specified in this paragraph are—

(A) Executive Order 13219, as amended by Executive Order 13304 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property of persons who threaten international stabilization efforts in the Western Balkans); and

(B) Executive Order 14033 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and suspending entry into the United States of certain persons contributing to the destabilizing situation in the Western Balkans), as in effect on such date of enactment.

(4) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The President may terminate the application of a sanction described in paragraph (1) with respect to a person if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that such person—

(A) has not engaged in the activity that was the basis for such sanctions, if applicable, during the two-year period immediately preceding such termination date; or

(B) otherwise no longer meets the criteria that was the basis for such sanctions.

(5) WAIVER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President may waive the application of sanctions under this subsection for renewable periods not to exceed 180 days if the President—

(i) determines that such a waiver is in the national security interests of the United States; and

(ii) not less than 15 days before the granting of the waiver, submits to the appropriate congressional committees a notice of and justification for the waiver.

(B) FORM.—The waiver described in subparagraph (A) may be transmitted in classified form.

(6) EXCEPTIONS.—

(A) HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.—Sanctions under this subsection shall not apply to—

(i) the conduct or facilitation of a transaction for the provision of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, medical devices, humanitarian assistance, or for humanitarian purposes; or

(ii) transactions that are necessary for, or related to, the activities described in clause (i).

(B) COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply with respect to an alien if admitting or paroling such alien is necessary—

(i) to comply with United States obligations under—

(I) the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947;

(II) the Convention on Consular Relations, done at Vienna April 24, 1963, and entered into force March 19, 1967; or

(III) any other international agreement; or

(ii) to carry out or assist law enforcement activity in the United States.

(C) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply to—

(i) any activity subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.); or

(ii) any authorized intelligence activities of the United States.

(D) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The requirement to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property under this section shall not include the authority or a requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(ii) DEFINED TERM.—In this subparagraph, the term “good” means any article, natural or manmade substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

(7) RULEMAKING.—The President is authorized to promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section (which may include regulatory exceptions), including under section 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1704).

(8) SUNSET.—This subsection shall cease to have force or effect beginning on the date that is 8 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(f) DEMOCRATIC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY INITIATIVES.—

(1) ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE.—The Secretary of State, through ongoing and new programs, shall develop an initiative that—

(A) seeks to expand technical assistance in each Western Balkans country, taking into account local conditions and contingent on the agreement of the host country government to develop new national anti-corruption strategies;

(B) seeks to share best practices with, and provide training to, civilian law enforcement agencies and judicial institutions, and other relevant administrative bodies, of the Western Balkans countries, to improve the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of such agencies and institutions;

(C) strengthens existing national anti-corruption strategies—

(i) to combat political corruption, particularly in the judiciary, independent election oversight bodies, and public procurement processes; and

(ii) to strengthen regulatory and legislative oversight of critical governance areas, such as freedom of information and public procurement, including by strengthening cyber defenses and ICT infrastructure networks;

(D) includes the Western Balkans countries in the European Democratic Resilience Initiative of the Department of State, or any equivalent successor initiative, and considers the Western Balkans as a recipient of anti-corruption funding for such initiative; and

(E) seeks to promote the important role of an independent media in countering corruption through engagements with governments of Western Balkan countries and providing training opportunities for journalists on investigative reporting.

(2) PRIORITIZING CYBER RESILIENCE, REGIONAL TRADE, AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS.—

(A) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(i) promoting stronger economic, civic, and political relationships among Western Balkans countries will enable countries to better utilize existing resources and maximize their economic security and democratic resilience by reinforcing cyber defenses and increasing trade in goods and services among other countries in the region; and

(ii) United States investments in and assistance toward creating a more integrated region ensures political stability and security for the region.

(B) 5-YEAR STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE IN WESTERN BALKANS.—Not later than 180 days after

the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a regional economic development and democratic resilience strategy for the Western Balkans that complements the efforts of the European Union, European nations, and other multilateral financing institutions—

(i) to consider the full set of tools and resources available from the relevant agencies;

(ii) to include efforts to ensure coordination with multilateral and bilateral partners, such as the European Union, the World Bank, and other relevant assistance frameworks;

(iii) to include an initial public assessment of—

(I) economic opportunities for which United States businesses, or those of other like-minded partner countries, would be competitive;

(II) legal, economic, governance, infrastructural, or other barriers limiting United States trade and investment in the Western Balkans;

(III) the effectiveness of all existing regional cooperation initiatives, such as the Open Balkan initiative and the Western Balkans Common Regional Market; and

(IV) ways to increase United States trade and investment within the Western Balkans;

(v) to develop human and institutional capacity and infrastructure across multiple sectors of economies, including clean energy, energy efficiency, agriculture, small and medium-sized enterprise development, health, and cyber-security;

(v) to assist with the development and implementation of regional and international trade agreements;

(vi) to support women-owned enterprises;

(vii) to promote government and civil society policies and programs that combat corruption and encourage transparency (including by supporting independent media by promoting the safety and security of journalists), free and fair competition, sound governance, judicial reform, environmental stewardship, and business environments conducive to sustainable and inclusive economic growth; and

(viii) to include a public diplomacy strategy that describes the actions that will be taken by relevant agencies to increase support for the United States relationship by citizens of Western Balkans countries.

(C) BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congressional committees that describes the progress made towards developing the strategy required under subparagraph (B).

(3) REGIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE.—

(A) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, may coordinate a regional trade and development initiative for the region comprised of each Western Balkans country and any European Union member country that shares a border with a Western Balkans country (referred to in this subsection as the “Western Balkans region”) in accordance with this paragraph.

(B) INITIATIVE ELEMENTS.—The initiative authorized under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) promote private sector growth and competitiveness and increase the capacity of businesses, particularly small and medium-

sized enterprises, in the Western Balkans region;

(ii) aim to increase intraregional exports to countries in the Balkans and European Union member states;

(iii) aim to increase United States exports to, and investments in, countries in the Balkans;

(iv) support startup companies, including companies led by youth or women, in the Western Balkans region by—

(I) providing training in business skills and leadership; and

(II) providing opportunities to connect to sources of capital;

(v) encourage and promote inward and outward trade and investment through engagement with the Western Balkans diaspora communities in the United States and abroad;

(vi) provide assistance to the governments and civil society organizations of Western Balkans countries to develop—

(I) regulations to ensure fair and effective investment; and

(II) screening tools to identify and deter malign investments and other coercive economic practices;

(vii) review existing assistance programming relating to the Western Balkans across Federal agencies—

(I) to eliminate duplication; and

(II) to identify areas of potential coordination within the Western Balkans region;

(viii) identify areas where application of additional resources could expand successful programs to 1 or more countries in the Western Balkans region by building on the existing experience and program architecture;

(ix) compare existing single-country sector analyses to determine areas of focus that would benefit from a regional approach with respect to the Western Balkans region; and

(x) promote intraregional trade throughout the Western Balkans region through—

(I) programming, including grants, cooperative agreements, and other forms of assistance;

(II) expanding awareness of the availability of loans and other financial instruments from the United States Government; and

(III) coordinating access to existing trade instruments available through allies and partners in the Western Balkans region, including the European Union and international financial institutions.

(C) SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.—The initiative authorized under subparagraph (A) should facilitate and prioritize support for regional infrastructure projects, including—

(i) transportation projects that build roads, bridges, railways and other physical infrastructure to facilitate travel of goods and people throughout the Western Balkans region;

(ii) technical support and investments needed to meet United States and European Union standards for air travel, including screening and information sharing;

(iii) the development of telecommunications networks with trusted providers;

(iv) infrastructure projects that connect Western Balkans countries to each other and to countries with which they share a border;

(v) the effective analysis of tenders and transparent procurement processes;

(vi) investment transparency programs that will help countries in the Western Balkans analyze gaps and establish institutional and regulatory reforms necessary—

(I) to create an enabling environment for trade and investment; and

(II) to strengthen protections against suspect investments through public procurement and privatization and through foreign direct investments;

(vii) sharing best practices learned from the United States and other international partners to ensure that institutional and regulatory mechanisms for addressing these issues are fair, nonarbitrary, effective, and free from corruption;

(viii) projects that support regional energy security and reduce dependence on Russian energy;

(ix) technical assistance and generating private investment in projects that promote connectivity and energy-sharing in the Western Balkans region;

(x) technical assistance to support regional collaboration on environmental protection that includes governmental, political, civic, and business stakeholders; and

(xi) technical assistance to develop financing options and help create linkages with potential financing institutions and investors.

(D) REQUIREMENTS.—All programming under the initiative authorized under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) be open to the participation of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia;

(ii) be consistent with European Union accession requirements;

(iii) be focused on retaining talent within the Western Balkans;

(iv) promote government policies in Western Balkans countries that encourage free and fair competition, sound governance, environmental protection, and business environments that are conducive to sustainable and inclusive economic growth; and

(v) include a public diplomacy strategy to inform local and regional audiences in the Western Balkans region about the initiative, including specific programs and projects.

(4) UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION.—

(A) APPOINTMENTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, subject to the availability of appropriations, the Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation, in collaboration with the Secretary of State, should consider including a regional office with responsibilities for the Western Balkans within the Corporation's plans to open new regional offices.

(B) JOINT REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall submit a joint report to the appropriate congressional committees that includes—

(i) an assessment of the benefits of providing sovereign loan guarantees to countries in the Western Balkans to support infrastructure and energy diversification projects;

(ii) an outline of additional resources, such as tools, funding, and personnel, which may be required to offer sovereign loan guarantees in the Western Balkans; and

(iii) an assessment of how the United States International Development Finance Corporation can deploy its insurance products in support of bonds or other instruments issued to raise capital through United States financial markets in the Western Balkans.

(g) PROMOTING CROSS-CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(A) promoting partnerships between United States universities and universities in the Western Balkans, particularly universities in traditionally under-served communities, advances United States foreign policy goals and requires a whole-of-government ap-

proach, including the utilization of public-private partnerships;

(B) such university partnerships would provide opportunities for exchanging academic ideas, technical expertise, research, and cultural understanding for the benefit of the United States; and

(C) the seven countries in the Western Balkans meet the requirements under section 105(c)(4) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151c(c)(4)).

(2) UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS.—The President, working through the Secretary of State, is authorized to provide assistance, consistent with section 105 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151c), to promote the establishment of partnerships between United States universities and universities in the Western Balkans, including—

(A) supporting research and analysis on foreign policy, cyber resilience, and disinformation;

(B) working with partner governments to reform policies, improve curricula, strengthen data systems, train teachers and students, including English language teaching, and to provide quality, inclusive learning materials;

(C) encouraging knowledge exchanges to help provide individuals, particularly at-risk youth, women, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable, marginalized, or underserved communities, with relevant education, training, and skills for meaningful employment;

(D) promoting teaching and research exchanges between institutions of higher education in the Western Balkans and in the United States; and

(E) encouraging alliances and exchanges with like-minded institutions of education within the Western Balkans and the larger European continent.

(h) PEACE CORPS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Peace Corps, whose mission is to promote world peace and friendship, in part by helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women, provides an invaluable opportunity to connect the people of the United States with the people of the Western Balkans.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Peace Corps should submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees that includes an analysis of current opportunities for Peace Corps expansion in the Western Balkans region.

(i) YOUNG BALKAN LEADERS INITIATIVE.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that regular people-to-people exchange programs that bring religious leaders, journalists, civil society members, politicians, and other individuals from the Western Balkans to the United States will strengthen existing relationships and advance United States interests and shared values in the Western Balkans region.

(2) BOLD LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR YOUNG BALKAN LEADERS.—

(A) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—The Department of State, through BOLD, a leadership program for young leaders in certain Western Balkans countries, plays an important role to develop young leaders in improving civic engagement and economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro.

(B) EXPANSION.—BOLD should be expanded, subject to the availability of appropriations, to the entire Western Balkans region.

(3) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of State should further develop and implement BOLD, which shall hereafter be known as the “Young Balkan Leaders Initiative”, to pro-

mote educational and professional development for young adult leaders and professionals in the Western Balkans who have demonstrated a passion to contribute to the continued development of the Western Balkans region.

(4) CONDUCT OF INITIATIVE.—The goals of the Young Balkan Leaders Initiative shall be—

(A) to further build the capacity of young Balkan leaders in the Western Balkans in the areas of business and information technology, cyber security and digitization, agriculture, civic engagement, and public administration;

(B) to support young Balkan leaders by offering professional development, training, and networking opportunities, particularly in the areas of leadership, innovation, civic engagement, elections, human rights, entrepreneurship, good governance, public administration, and journalism;

(C) to support young political, parliamentary, and civic Balkan leaders in collaboration on regional initiatives related to good governance, environmental protection, government ethics, and minority inclusion;

(D) to provide increased economic and technical assistance to young Balkan leaders to promote economic growth and strengthen ties between businesses, investors, and entrepreneurs in the United States and in Western Balkans countries;

(E) to tailor such assistance to advance the particular objectives of each United States mission in the Western Balkans within the framework outlined in this subsection; and

(F) to secure funding for such assistance from existing funds available to each United States Mission in the Western Balkans.

(5) FELLOWSHIPS.—Under the Young Balkan Leaders Initiative, the Secretary of State shall award fellowships to young leaders from the Western Balkans who—

(A) are between 18 and 35 years of age;

(B) have demonstrated strong capabilities in entrepreneurship, innovation, public service, and leadership;

(C) have had a positive impact in their communities, organizations, or institutions, including by promoting cross-regional and multiethnic cooperation; and

(D) represent a cross-section of geographic, gender, political, and cultural diversity.

(6) PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP CENTER.—Under the Young Balkan Leaders Initiative, the Secretary of State shall take advantage of existing and future public diplomacy facilities (commonly known as “American Spaces”) to hire staff and develop programming for the establishment of a flagship public engagement and leadership center in the Western Balkans that seeks—

(A) to counter disinformation and malign influence;

(B) to promote cross-cultural engagement;

(C) to provide training for young leaders from Western Balkans countries described in paragraph (5);

(D) to harmonize the efforts of existing venues throughout Western Balkans countries established by the Office of American Spaces; and

(E) to annually bring together participants from the Young Balkan Leaders Initiative to provide platforms for regional networking.

(7) BRIEFING ON CERTAIN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congressional committees that describes the status of exchange programs involving the Western Balkans region.

(B) ELEMENTS.—The briefing required under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) assess the factors constraining the number and frequency of participants from Western Balkans countries in the International Visitor Leadership Program of the Department of State;

(ii) identify the resources that are necessary to address the factors described in clause (i); and

(iii) describe a strategy for connecting alumni and participants of professional development exchange programs of the Department of State in the Western Balkans with alumni and participants from other countries in Europe, to enhance inter-region and intra-region, people-to-people ties.

(j) SUPPORTING CYBERSECURITY AND CYBER RESILIENCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(A) United States support for cybersecurity, cyber resilience, and secure ICT infrastructure in Western Balkans countries will strengthen the region's ability to defend itself from and respond to malicious cyber activity conducted by nonstate and foreign actors, including foreign governments, that seek to influence the region;

(B) insecure ICT networks that are vulnerable to manipulation can increase opportunities for—

(i) the compromise of cyber infrastructure, including data networks, electronic infrastructure, and software systems; and

(ii) the use of online information operations by adversaries and malign actors to undermine United States allies and interests; and

(C) it is in the national security interest of the United States to support the cybersecurity and cyber resilience of Western Balkans countries.

(2) INTERAGENCY REPORT ON CYBERSECURITY AND THE DIGITAL INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT IN WESTERN BALKANS COUNTRIES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees that contains—

(A) an overview of interagency efforts to strengthen cybersecurity and cyber resilience in Western Balkans countries;

(B) a review of the information environment in each Western Balkans country;

(C) a review of existing United States Government cyber and digital initiatives that—

(i) counter influence operations and safeguard elections and democratic processes in Western Balkans countries;

(ii) strengthen ICT infrastructure and cybersecurity capacity in the Western Balkans;

(iii) support democracy and internet freedom in Western Balkans countries; and

(iv) build cyber capacity of governments who are allies or partners of the United States;

(D) an assessment of cyber threat information sharing between the United States and Western Balkans countries;

(E) an assessment of—

(i) options for the United States to better support cybersecurity and cyber resilience in Western Balkans countries through changes to current assistance authorities; and

(ii) the advantages or limitations, such as funding or office space, of posting cyber professionals from other Federal departments and agencies to United States diplomatic posts in Western Balkans countries and providing relevant training to Foreign Service Officers; and

(F) any additional support needed from the United States for the cybersecurity and cyber resilience of the following NATO Allies: Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Croatia.

(k) RELATIONS BETWEEN KOSOVO AND SERBIA.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(A) the Agreement on the Path to Normalization of Relations, which was agreed to by Kosovo and Serbia on February 27, 2023, with the facilitation of the European Union, is a positive step forward in advancing normalization between the two countries;

(B) Serbia and Kosovo should seek to make immediate progress on the Implementation Annex to the agreement referred to in subparagraph (A);

(C) once sufficient progress has been made on the Implementation Annex, the United States should consider advancing initiatives to strengthen bilateral relations with both countries, which could include—

(i) establishing bilateral strategic dialogues with Kosovo and Serbia; and

(ii) advancing concrete initiatives to deepen trade and investment with both countries; and

(D) the United States should continue to support a comprehensive final agreement between Kosovo and Serbia based on mutual recognition.

(2) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States Government that—

(A) it shall not pursue any policy that advocates for land swaps, partition, or other forms of redrawing borders along ethnic lines in the Western Balkans as a means to arbitrate disputes between nation states in the region; and

(B) it should support pluralistic democracies in countries in the Western Balkans as a means to prevent a return to the ethnic strife that once characterized the region.

(l) REPORTS ON RUSSIAN AND CHINESE MALIGN INFLUENCE OPERATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.—

(1) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every two years thereafter, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the heads of other Federal departments or agencies, as appropriate, shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees regarding Russian and Chinese malign influence operations and campaigns carried out with respect to Balkan countries that seek—

(A) to undermine democratic institutions;

(B) to promote political instability; and

(C) to harm the interests of the United States and other North Atlantic Treaty Organization member and partner states in the Western Balkans.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) an assessment of the objectives of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China regarding malign influence operations and campaigns carried out with respect to Western Balkans countries—

(i) to undermine democratic institutions, including the planning and execution of democratic elections;

(ii) to promote political instability; and

(iii) to manipulate the information environment;

(B) the activities and roles of the Department of State and other relevant Federal agencies in countering Russian and Chinese malign influence operations and campaigns;

(C) a comprehensive list identifying—

(i) each network, entity and individual, to the extent such information is available, of Russia, China, or any other country with which Russia or China may cooperate, that is supporting such Russian or Chinese malign influence operations or campaigns, including the provision of financial or operational support to activities in a Western Balkans country that may limit freedom of speech or create barriers of access to demo-

cratic processes, including exercising the right to vote in a free and fair election; and

(ii) the role of each such entity in providing such support;

(D) the identification of the tactics, techniques, and procedures used in Russian or Chinese malign influence operations and campaigns in Western Balkans countries;

(E) an assessment of the effect of previous Russian or Chinese malign influence operations and campaigns that targeted alliances and partnerships of the United States Armed Forces in the Western Balkans, including the effectiveness of such operations and campaigns in achieving the objectives of Russia and China, respectively;

(F) the identification of each Western Balkans country with respect to which Russia or China has conducted or attempted to conduct a malign influence operation or campaign;

(G) an assessment of the capacity and efforts of NATO and of each individual Western Balkans country to counter Russian or Chinese malign influence operations and campaigns carried out with respect to Western Balkans countries;

(H) the efforts by the United States to combat such malign influence operations in the Western Balkans, including through the Countering Russian Influence Fund and the Countering People's Republic of China Malign Influence Fund;

(I) an assessment of the tactics, techniques, and procedures that the Secretary of State determines are likely to be used in future Russian or Chinese malign influence operations and campaigns carried out with respect to Western Balkans countries; and

(J) any additional authorities, resources, or activities that could increase the United States Government's capacity to counter Russian and Chinese malign influence operations and campaigns in Western Balkans countries.

(3) FORM.—Each report required under paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

**SA 2243.** Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 4638, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2025 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title XII, insert the following:

**Subtitle —Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty**

**SEC. 01. SHORT TITLE.**

This subtitle may be cited as the “Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2024”.

**SEC. 02. FINDINGS.**

Section 2 of the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–347; 22 U.S.C. 5811 note) is amended to read as follows:

**“SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

“Congress finds the following:

“(1) Consistently, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, the illegitimate leader of Belarus, engages in a pattern of clear and persistent violations of human rights, democratic governance, and fundamental freedoms.

“(2) Alyaksandr Lukashenka has overseen and participated in multiple fundamentally flawed presidential and parliamentary elections undermining the legitimacy of executive, judicial, and legislative authority in Belarus.