

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4148

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands region, and
for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 17, 2024

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ERNST) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands
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 “Pacific Partnership
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

8 (1) the United States has longstanding and en-
9 during cultural, historic, economic, strategic, and
10 people-to-people connections with the Pacific Islands

1 region, based on shared values, cultural histories,
2 common interests, and a commitment to fostering
3 mutual understanding and cooperation;

4 (2) successive Presidential administrations have
5 recognized the critical importance of the Pacific Is-
6 lands region to the world in high-level strategic doc-
7 uments, including—

8 (A) the 2015 National Security Strategy,
9 which first declared the rebalance to Asia and
10 the Pacific, affirmed the United States as a Pa-
11 cific nation, and paved the way for subsequent
12 United States engagement with the Pacific Is-
13 lands region;

14 (B) the 2017 National Security Strategy,
15 which included a commitment to “shore up
16 fragile partner states in the Pacific Islands re-
17 gion to reduce their vulnerability to economic
18 fluctuations and natural disasters”;

19 (C) the 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report,
20 which identified the Pacific Islands region as
21 “critical to the U.S. strategy because of our
22 shared values, interests, and commitments”;

23 (D) the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy, which
24 recognized the need to engage further with the

1 Pacific Islands region on shared security goals;
2 and

3 (E) the 2022 Pacific Partnership Strategy,
4 which outlined goals and methods for deepening
5 United States partnerships with Pacific Island
6 nations;

7 (3) the United States Government should fur-
8 ther develop, expand, and support a comprehensive
9 and multifaceted United States policy for the Pacific
10 Islands region that—

11 (A) promotes peace, security, and pros-
12 perity for all nations in a manner that respects
13 the sovereignty and political independence of all
14 nations;

15 (B) preserves the Pacific Ocean as a cor-
16 ridor for international maritime economic op-
17 portunities and growth and promotes sustain-
18 able development;

19 (C) supports regional efforts to address
20 shared challenges, including by strengthening
21 resilience to natural disasters and stewardship
22 of natural resources; and

23 (D) strengthens democratic governance
24 and the rule of law and promotes human rights

1 and the preservation of the region’s cultural
2 heritages;

3 (4) the United States should support the vision,
4 values, and objectives of existing regional multilat-
5 eral institutions, such as the Pacific Islands Forum
6 and the Pacific Community, and frameworks includ-
7 ing—

8 (A) the 2000 Biketawa Declaration;

9 (B) the 2014 Framework for Pacific Re-
10 gionalism;

11 (C) the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional
12 Security;

13 (D) the Boe Declaration Action Plan; and

14 (E) the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific
15 Continent; and

16 (5) the United States should work closely with
17 allies and partners of the United States that have
18 existing relationships and interests in the Pacific Is-
19 lands region, such as Australia, Japan, South
20 Korea, New Zealand, and Taiwan, and regional in-
21 stitutions such as the Pacific Islands Forum.

22 **SEC. 3. STRATEGY FOR PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2026,
24 and every 4 years thereafter, the President, in coordina-
25 tion with the Secretary of State, shall develop and submit

1 to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy en-
2 titled the “Strategy for Pacific Partnership” (in this sec-
3 tion referred to as the “Strategy”).

4 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The Strategy shall
5 include each of the following:

6 (1) A description of overarching goals for
7 United States engagement in the Pacific Islands re-
8 gion, including with respect to the diplomatic posts,
9 defense posture, and economic engagement of the
10 United States.

11 (2) An assessment of threats to and pressures
12 on the Pacific Islands region, including such threats
13 and pressures caused by factors such as—

14 (A) natural disasters;

15 (B) illegal, unreported, and unregulated
16 fishing;

17 (C) the presence and activity of non-
18 United States militaries;

19 (D) developmental challenges;

20 (E) economic coercion and corruption; and

21 (F) other factors causing a direct risk to
22 the national interests of the United States in
23 the Pacific Islands region, as determined by the
24 President.

1 (3) A plan to address the threats assessed pur-
2 suant to paragraph (2).

3 (4) An analysis of the needs and goals ex-
4 pressed by governments of nations in the Pacific Is-
5 lands region, including at or through multilateral in-
6 stitutions, evaluated in light of the national interests
7 of the United States.

8 (5) A plan for the resources necessary for the
9 United States to meet its goals in the Pacific Islands
10 region.

11 (6) An identification of mechanisms, including
12 existing forums, for coordinating and cooperating on
13 shared goals among the following, as appropriate:

14 (A) The governments of nations in the Pa-
15 cific Islands region.

16 (B) Regional partners in the Pacific Is-
17 lands region, including multilateral forums and
18 organizations such as the Pacific Islands
19 Forum.

20 (C) Civil society in the Pacific Islands re-
21 gion.

22 (D) Subnational governments of the
23 United States in the Pacific.

1 (c) CONSULTATION.—In developing the Strategy, the
2 President shall consult, as the President considers appro-
3 priate, with—

4 (1) such governmental agencies of the United
5 States as the President considers relevant;

6 (2) regional organizations such as the Pacific
7 Islands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development
8 Program, the Pacific Community, the Forum Fish-
9 eries Agency, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Re-
10 gional Environment Programme;

11 (3) the governments of nations in the Pacific
12 Islands region;

13 (4) stakeholders from civil society;

14 (5) allies and partners of the United States;

15 and

16 (6) States and territories of the United States
17 in the Pacific.

18 (d) REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
20 after the date on which the Strategy is submitted,
21 the President shall submit to the appropriate con-
22 gressional committees a report on the implementa-
23 tion of the Strategy.

1 (2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report
2 required by paragraph (1) shall include the fol-
3 lowing:

4 (A) A proposed timeline for the implemen-
5 tation of the Strategy.

6 (B) The number of full-time equivalent po-
7 sitions and contractors needed to achieve the
8 goals included in the Strategy.

9 (C) A description of any institutional or
10 structural reorganizations the President rec-
11 ommends to help carry out the Strategy.

12 (D) An identification of any additional
13 funding needed to carry out the Strategy.

14 (3) CONSOLIDATION.—The report required by
15 paragraph (1) may be consolidated with any other
16 report required to be submitted by the President on
17 the date described in such paragraph or a similar
18 date.

19 **SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES, EXEMP-**
20 **TIONS, AND IMMUNITIES TO THE PACIFIC IS-**
21 **LANDS FORUM.**

22 The provisions of the International Organizations Im-
23 munities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) may be extended to
24 the Pacific Islands Forum in the same manner, to the
25 same extent, and subject to the same conditions as such

1 provisions may be extended to a public international orga-
2 nization in which the United States participates pursuant
3 to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Con-
4 gress authorizing such participation or making an appro-
5 priation for such participation.

6 **SEC. 5. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH ALLIES**
7 **AND PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS RE-**
8 **GION.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President, in consultation
10 with the Secretary of State and such other heads of Fed-
11 eral departments and agencies as the President considers
12 relevant, shall consult and coordinate with allies and part-
13 ners of the United States in the Pacific Islands region,
14 including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan, and re-
15 gional institutions such as the Pacific Islands Forum, the
16 Pacific Islands Development Program, the Pacific Com-
17 munity, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Envi-
18 ronment Programme, with respect to programs to provide
19 assistance to the Pacific Islands region, including for pur-
20 poses of—

- 21 (1) deconflicting programming;
- 22 (2) ensuring that any programming does not
- 23 adversely affect the absorptive capacity of the Pa-
- 24 cific Islands region;

1 (3) ensuring complementary programs benefit
2 the Pacific Islands region to the maximum extent
3 practicable; and

4 (4) ensuring that programming aligns with re-
5 gional development goals, as outlined by documents
6 such as the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Con-
7 tinent, in order to support sustainable development
8 and promote a shared vision for the future of the
9 Pacific Islands region.

10 (b) FORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS.—The Presi-
11 dent shall establish a formal consultative process with the
12 allies and partners described in subsection (a) for coordi-
13 nation with respect to the programs described in such sub-
14 section.

15 **SEC. 6. REPORTS ON TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AFFECTING**
16 **THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION.**

17 (a) UPDATES OF CERTAIN REPORTS.—The Secretary
18 of State, in coordination with such other heads of Federal
19 departments and agencies as the Secretary considers ap-
20 propriate, shall annually update the reports listed in sub-
21 section (b) to include a discussion of transnational crime
22 affecting the Pacific Islands region.

23 (b) REPORTS LISTED.—The reports listed in this
24 subsection are the following:

1 (1) The international narcotics control strategy
 2 report required by section 489(a) of the Foreign As-
 3 sistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291h(a)).

4 (2) The report on international compliance with
 5 fisheries requirements required by section 607 of the
 6 High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection
 7 Act (16 U.S.C. 1826h).

8 (3) The report on trafficking in persons re-
 9 quired by section 110(b)(1) of the Trafficking Vic-
 10 tims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107(b)(1)).

11 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

12 In this Act:

13 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
 14 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
 15 mittees” means—

16 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
 17 the Senate; and

18 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
 19 the House of Representatives.

20 (2) PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION.—The term “Pa-
 21 cific Islands region” means the nations, territories,
 22 and other jurisdictions in the Pacific Ocean within
 23 Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

