

H.R. 23

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 30, 2024

Mr. SALINGER of Olympia (for himself, Mr. Sullivan of Olympia, Mr. Conway of Lincoln, Mr. McCarthy of Lincoln) introduced the following bill;

A BILL

To enhance the defensive cybersecurity capabilities of partner nations in Southeast Asia, promote regional stability by strengthening collective cybersecurity resilience and protect national security interests by addressing cyber threats.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

This Act may be cited as the “Strategic Cyber Defense in Southeast Asia Act of 2024”.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

- (a) COVERED NATIONS.— The term “covered nations” refers to Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.
- (b) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.— The term “appropriate committees of congress” refers to the Ethics and Oversight Committee of the House of Representatives and the Relations Committee of the Senate.

SECTION 3. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

- The Indo-Pacific region, including Southeast Asia, is of critical strategic importance to United States national security and economic interests.
- Cybersecurity threats in Southeast Asia have increased significantly, with advanced persistent threats (APTs) targeting governments, critical infrastructure, and private enterprises.

3. Southeast Asia is home to five of the top ten countries most targeted by cyberattacks globally, highlighting the urgent need for collaborative defensive measures.
4. The nations of Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines have demonstrated a willingness to collaborate with the United States on cybersecurity initiatives, making them valuable partners in addressing regional cyber threats.

SECTION 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF CYBER COOPERATION PROGRAM

- (a) **PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT.**— The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall establish a program to enhance cyber defense cooperation with foreign military partners in Southeast Asia, specifically with the nations of Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.
- (b) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.**— The program shall include but is not limited to the following activities—
- (i) Conducting joint training exercises with partner nations to strengthen defensive cybersecurity capabilities,
 - (ii) Providing technical assistance to develop and enhance secure communication systems and incident response frameworks,
 - (iii) Establishing secure channels for sharing cyber threat intelligence and best practices, and
 - (iv) Offering resources to modernize partner nations' cybersecurity infrastructure, including software and hardware upgrades.
- (c) **PROGRAM DURATION.**— The program shall operate for a period of 5 years or 1,826 days from the date of its establishment, after which its operations and effectiveness shall be evaluated by the appropriate committees of Congress.
- (d) **FUNDING AUTHORIZATION.**— Funds for the program shall be appropriated as authorized under the Authority for Building Partner Capacity to Combat Terrorism and Enhance Regional Security (10 U.S.C. § 333) and other relevant authorities as determined by the Secretary of Defense for each fiscal year 2024-25 through 2029-30, as necessary, to implement the program.

SECTION 5. ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT

- (a) **REPORT SUBMISSION.**— The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall submit an annual report to the appropriate committees of Congress.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.— Not later than February 1 of each year, the Secretary of Defense shall develop and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an annual report, to be entitled “Report to Congress on Defensive Cybersecurity Development in Southeast Asia”, that identifies—

- (i) A detailed summary of activities conducted under the program during the preceding year,
- (ii) An assessment of the program’s impact on the cybersecurity capabilities of covered nations,
- (iii) A financial accounting of funds expended, and
- (iv) Recommendations for future improvements or expansions of the program.

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of the Act, and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 7. ENACTMENT

EFFECTIVE DATE.— The provisions of this Act shall come into force immediately upon passage.
