

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1083

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 20, 2021

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## AN ACT

To require a strategy for engagement with Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Southeast Asia Strat-  
3 egy Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Southeast Asia is the fulcrum of the Indo-  
7 Pacific region, providing both a geographic and mar-  
8 itime link between East and South Asia.

9 (2) The Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
10 (ASEAN), a regional intergovernmental organiza-  
11 tion, remains central to the Indo-Pacific region’s in-  
12 stitutional architecture and to United States foreign  
13 policy toward the region.

14 (3) The United States has reaffirmed that the  
15 security and sovereignty of its Southeast Asian allies  
16 and partners, including a strong, independent  
17 ASEAN, remain vital to the prosperity and stability  
18 of the Indo-Pacific region.

19 (4) The United States has committed to deepen  
20 longstanding alliances and partnerships with a range  
21 of Southeast Asian nations, including by promoting  
22 our shared values, democracy, human rights, and  
23 civil society.

24 (5) Since the end of the Second World War,  
25 United States investments in strengthening alliances  
26 and partnerships with Southeast Asian nations have

1 yielded tremendous returns for United States inter-  
2 ests, as working with and through these alliances  
3 and partnerships have increased the region's ability  
4 to address common challenges.

5 (6) ASEAN member states are critical United  
6 States security partners in protecting the freedom  
7 and openness of the maritime domain and pre-  
8 venting violent extremism and the trafficking of  
9 weapons of mass destruction.

10 (7) ASEAN member states have contributed  
11 significantly to regional disaster monitoring and  
12 management and emergency response through initia-  
13 tives such as the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for  
14 Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management,  
15 an inter-governmental organization that facilitates  
16 coordination and cooperation among ASEAN mem-  
17 ber states and international organizations in times  
18 of emergency.

19 (8) According to the 2018 ASEAN Business  
20 Outlook Survey, ASEAN member states are vital to  
21 the prosperity of the United States economy and ex-  
22 ports to ASEAN economies support more than  
23 500,000 jobs in the United States.

24 (9) The United States and ASEAN have estab-  
25 lished a new strategic partnership that will enhance

1 cooperation across the economic, political-security,  
2 and people-to-people pillars of the relationship.

3 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

4 It is the policy of the United States to—

5 (1) deepen cooperation with ASEAN and  
6 ASEAN member states in the interest of promoting  
7 peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific re-  
8 gion;

9 (2) affirm the importance of ASEAN centrality  
10 and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the evolving institu-  
11 tional architecture of the Indo-Pacific region; and

12 (3) establish and communicate a comprehensive  
13 strategy toward the Indo-Pacific region that articu-  
14 lates—

15 (A) the role and importance of Southeast  
16 Asia to the United States;

17 (B) the value of the United States-ASEAN  
18 relationship;

19 (C) the mutual interests of all parties;

20 (D) the concrete and material benefits all  
21 nations derive from strong United States en-  
22 gagement and leadership in Southeast Asia; and

23 (E) efforts to forge and maintain ASEAN  
24 consensus, especially on key issues of political

1           and security concern to the region, such as the  
2           South China Sea.

3 **SEC. 4. STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTHEAST**  
4           **ASIA AND ASEAN.**

5           (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the  
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,  
7 in consultation with the heads of other Federal depart-  
8 ments and agencies as appropriate, shall develop and sub-  
9 mit to the appropriate congressional committees a com-  
10 prehensive strategy for engagement with Southeast Asia  
11 and ASEAN.

12           (b) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The strategy re-  
13 quired by subsection (a) shall include the following:

14           (1) A statement of enduring United States in-  
15 terests in Southeast Asia and a description of efforts  
16 to bolster the effectiveness of ASEAN.

17           (2) A description of efforts to—

18           (A) deepen and expand Southeast Asian al-  
19 liances, partnerships, and multilateral engage-  
20 ments, including efforts to expand broad based  
21 and inclusive economic growth, security ties, se-  
22 curity cooperation and interoperability, eco-  
23 nomic connectivity, and expand opportunities  
24 for ASEAN to work with other like-minded  
25 partners in the region; and

1 (B) encourage like-minded partners outside  
2 of the Indo-Pacific region to engage with  
3 ASEAN.

4 (3) A summary of initiatives across the whole  
5 of the United States Government to strengthen the  
6 United States partnership with Southeast Asian na-  
7 tions and ASEAN, including to promote broad based  
8 and inclusive economic growth, trade, investment,  
9 energy innovation and sustainability, public-private  
10 partnerships, physical and digital infrastructure de-  
11 velopment, education, disaster management, public  
12 health and global health security, and economic, po-  
13 litical, and public diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

14 (4) A summary of initiatives across the whole  
15 of the United States Government to enhance the ca-  
16 pacity of Southeast Asian nations with respect to en-  
17 forcing international law and multilateral sanctions,  
18 and initiatives to cooperate with ASEAN as an insti-  
19 tution in these areas.

20 (5) A summary of initiatives across the whole  
21 of the United States Government to promote human  
22 rights and democracy, to strengthen the rule of law,  
23 civil society, and transparent governance, to combat  
24 disinformation and to protect the integrity of elec-  
25 tions from outside influence.

1           (6) A summary of initiatives to promote secu-  
2           rity cooperation and security assistance within  
3           Southeast Asian nations, including—

4                   (A) maritime security and maritime do-  
5                   main awareness initiatives for protecting the  
6                   maritime commons and supporting international  
7                   law and freedom of navigation in the South  
8                   China Sea; and

9                   (B) efforts to combat terrorism, human  
10                  trafficking, piracy, and illegal fishing, and pro-  
11                  mote more open, reliable routes for sea lines of  
12                  communication.

13           (c) DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGY.—For the purposes  
14 of assuring allies and partners in Southeast Asia and  
15 deepening United States engagement with ASEAN, the  
16 Secretary of State shall direct each United States chief  
17 of mission to ASEAN and its member states to distribute  
18 the strategy required by subsection (a) to host govern-  
19 ments.

20           (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES  
21 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-  
22 gressional committees” means—

23                   (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the  
24                   Committee on Armed Services of the House of Rep-  
25                   resentatives; and

