

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To provide for security in the Black Sea region, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To provide for security in the Black Sea 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 “Black Sea Security
5 Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON BLACK SEA SECURITY.**

7 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
8 gress that—

9 (1) it is in the interest of the United States to
10 support efforts to prevent the spread of further

1 armed conflict in Europe by recognizing the Black
2 Sea region as an arena of Russian aggression;

3 (2) littoral states of the Black Sea are critical
4 in countering aggression by the Government of the
5 Russian Federation and contributing to the collec-
6 tive security of NATO;

7 (3) the repeated, illegal, unprovoked, and vio-
8 lent attempts of the Russian Federation to expand
9 its territory and control access to the Mediterranean
10 Sea through the Black Sea constitutes a threat to
11 the national security of the United States and
12 NATO;

13 (4) the United States condemns attempts by
14 the Russian Federation to change or alter bound-
15 aries in the Black Sea region by force or any means
16 contrary to international law and to impose a sphere
17 of influence across the region;

18 (5) the United States and its allies should
19 robustly counter Russia's illegitimate territorial
20 claims on the Crimean Peninsula, along Ukraine's
21 territorial waters in the Black Sea and the Sea of
22 Azov, in the Black Sea's international waters, and in
23 the territories it is illegally occupying in Ukraine;

24 (6) the United States should continue to work
25 within NATO and with NATO Allies to develop a

1 long-term strategy to enhance security, establish a
2 permanent, sustainable presence along NATO's east-
3 ern flank, and bolster the democratic resilience of its
4 allies and partners in the region;

5 (7) the United States should work within
6 NATO and with NATO Allies to develop a regular,
7 rotational maritime presence in the Black Sea;

8 (8) the United States should also work with the
9 European Union on coordinating a strategy to sup-
10 port democratic initiatives and economic prosperity
11 in the region, which includes two European Union
12 members and four European Union aspirant nations;

13 (9) Turkey's behavior towards some regional al-
14 lies and democratic states has been counter-
15 productive and has contributed to increased tensions
16 in the region, and Turkey should avoid any actions
17 to further escalate regional tensions;

18 (10) the United States should work to foster
19 dialogue among countries within the Black Sea re-
20 gion to improve communication and intelligence
21 sharing and increase cyber defense capabilities;

22 (11) countries with historic and economic ties
23 to Russia are looking to the United States and Eu-
24 rope to provide a positive economic presence in the

1 broader region as a counterbalance to the Russian
2 Federation's malign influence in the region;

3 (12) it is in the interest of the United States
4 to support and bolster the economic ties between the
5 United States and Black Sea states;

6 (13) the United States should support the ini-
7 tiative undertaken by central and eastern European
8 states to advance the Three Seas Initiative Fund to
9 strengthen transport, energy, and digital infrastruc-
10 ture connectivity in the region between the Adriatic
11 Sea, Baltic Sea, and Black Sea;

12 (14) there are mutually beneficial opportunities
13 for increased investment and economic expansion,
14 particularly on energy, climate, and transport infra-
15 structure initiatives, between the United States and
16 Black Sea states and the broader region;

17 (15) improved economic ties between the United
18 States and the Black Sea states and the broader re-
19 gion can lead to a strengthened strategic partner-
20 ship;

21 (16) the United States must seek to address
22 the food security challenges arising from disruption
23 of Ukraine's Black Sea and Azov Sea ports, as this
24 global challenge will have critical national security

1 implications for the United States, our partners, and
2 allies;

3 (17) Turkey, in coordination with the United
4 Nations, has played an important role in alleviating
5 global food insecurity by negotiating two agreements
6 to allow grain exports from Ukrainian ports through
7 a safe corridor in the Black Sea;

8 (18) Russia has a brutal history of using hun-
9 ger as a weapon and must be stopped;

10 (19) countering the PRC's coercive economic
11 pursuits remains an important policy imperative in
12 order to further integrate the Black Sea states into
13 western economies and improve regional stability;
14 and

15 (20) Turkey's continued delay in ratifying Swe-
16 den and Finland's accession to NATO undermines
17 the strength of the alliance and inhibits the united
18 international response to Russia's unprovoked war in
19 Ukraine.

20 **SEC. 3. UNITED STATES POLICY.**

21 It is the policy of the United States to—

22 (1) actively deter the threat of Russia's further
23 escalation in the Black Sea region and defend free-
24 dom of navigation in the Black Sea to prevent the
25 spread of further armed conflict in Europe;

1 (2) advocate within NATO, among NATO Al-
2 lies, and within the European Union to develop a
3 long-term coordinated strategy to enhance security,
4 establish a permanent, sustainable presence in the
5 eastern flank, and bolster the democratic resilience
6 of United States allies and partners in the region;

7 (3) advocate within NATO and among NATO
8 Allies to develop a regular, rotational maritime pres-
9 ence in the Black Sea;

10 (4) support and bolster the economic ties be-
11 tween the United States and Black Sea partners and
12 mobilize the Department of State, the Department
13 of Defense, and other relevant Federal departments
14 and agencies by enhancing the United States pres-
15 ence and investment in Black Sea states;

16 (5) provide economic alternatives to the PRC's
17 coercive economic options that destabilize and fur-
18 ther erode economic integration of the Black Sea
19 states;

20 (6) ensure that the United States continues to
21 support Black Sea states' efforts to strengthen their
22 democratic institutions to prevent corruption and ac-
23 celerate their advancement into the Euroatlantic
24 community; and

1 (7) encourage the initiative undertaken by cen-
2 tral and eastern European states to advance the
3 Three Seas Initiative to strengthen transport, en-
4 ergy, and digital infrastructure connectivity in the
5 region between the Adriatic Sea, Baltic Sea, and
6 Black Sea.

7 **SEC. 4. BLACK SEA SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT STRAT-**
8 **EGY.**

9 (a) **BLACK SEA SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT**
10 **STRATEGY.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of
11 the enactment of this Act, the National Security Council,
12 in coordination with the Department of State, the Depart-
13 ment of Defense, and other relevant Federal departments
14 and agencies, is authorized to direct an interagency strat-
15 egy to increase coordination with NATO and the Euro-
16 pean Union, deepen economic ties, strengthen energy secu-
17 rity, support efforts to bolster their democratic resilience,
18 and enhance security assistance with our regional partners
19 in accordance with the values and interests of the United
20 States.

21 (b) **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES.**—The initiative es-
22 tablished under subsection (a) shall have the following
23 goals and objectives:

24 (1) Ensuring the efficient and effective delivery
25 of security assistance to regional partners in accord-

1 ance with the values and interests of the United
2 States, prioritizing assistance that will bolster de-
3 fenses against hybrid warfare and improve interoper-
4 ability with NATO forces.

5 (2) Bolstering United States support for the re-
6 gion's energy security and integration with Europe
7 and reducing their dependence on Russia while sup-
8 porting energy diversification.

9 (3) Mitigating the impact of economic coercion
10 by the Russian Federation and the PRC on Black
11 Sea states and identifying new opportunities for for-
12 eign direct investment from the United States and
13 cooperating countries and the enhancement of
14 United States business ties with regional partners in
15 accordance with the values and interests of the
16 United States.

17 (4) Increasing high-level engagement between
18 the United States and regional partners, and rein-
19 forcing economic growth, financing quality infra-
20 structure, and reinforcing trade with a focus on im-
21 proving high-level economic cooperation.

22 (5) Increasing United States coordination with
23 the European Union and NATO to maximize effec-
24 tiveness and minimize duplication.

25 (c) ACTIVITIES.—

1 (1) SECURITY.—The strategy established under
2 subsection (a) should include the following elements
3 related to security:

4 (A) A plan to increase interagency coordi-
5 nation on the Black Sea region.

6 (B) An assessment of whether a United
7 States-led initiative with NATO allies to in-
8 crease coordination, presence, and regional en-
9 gagement among Black Sea states is advisable.

10 (C) A strategy to increase security assist-
11 ance toward Black Sea states, focused on
12 Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and
13 Georgia.

14 (D) Prioritization of intelligence, surveil-
15 lance, and reconnaissance systems to monitor
16 Russia's operations in the Black Sea region.

17 (E) An assessment of the value of estab-
18 lishing a joint, multinational three-star head-
19 quarters on the Black Sea, responsible for plan-
20 ning, readiness, exercises, and coordination of
21 all Allied and partner military activity in the
22 greater Black Sea region.

23 (F) An assessment of the challenges and
24 opportunities of establishing a regular, rota-
25 tional NATO maritime presence in the Black

1 Sea, including an analysis of the capacity, capa-
2 bilities, and commitment of NATO members to
3 create this type of mission.

4 (G) An overview of Foreign Military Fi-
5 nancing, International Military Education and
6 Training, and other United States security as-
7 sistance to the region.

8 (H) A plan for communicating the changes
9 to NATO posture to the public in allied and
10 partner countries, as well as to publics in the
11 Russian Federation and Belarus.

12 (I) A plan for combating Russian
13 disinformation and propaganda in the Black
14 Sea region, utilizing the resources of the United
15 States Government, including the Global En-
16 gagement Center.

17 (J) A plan to promote greater freedom of
18 navigation to allow for greater security and eco-
19 nomic Black Sea access.

20 (2) ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.—The strategy es-
21 tablished under subsection (a) shall include the fol-
22 lowing elements related to economic prosperity:

23 (A) A strategy to foster dialogue between
24 experts from the United States and from the
25 Black Sea states on economic expansion, for-

1 eign direct investment, strengthening rule of
2 law initiatives, and mitigating economic coer-
3 cion by Russia and the PRC.

4 (B) A strategy for all the relevant Federal
5 departments and agencies that contribute to
6 United States economic statecraft to expand
7 their presence and identify new opportunities
8 for private investment with regional partners in
9 accordance with the values and interests of the
10 United States.

11 (C) Assessments on energy diversification,
12 focusing on the immediate need to replace en-
13 ergy supplies from Russia, and recognizing the
14 long-term importance of broader energy diver-
15 sification, including clean energy initiatives.

16 (D) Assessments of potential food security
17 solutions, including sustainable, long-term ar-
18 rangements beyond the Black Sea Grain Initia-
19 tive.

20 (3) **DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE.**—The strategy
21 established under subsection (a) shall include the
22 following elements related to democratic resilience:

23 (A) A strategy to increase independent
24 media and United States-supported media ini-

1 tiatives to combat foreign malign influence in
2 the Black Sea region.

3 (B) Greater mobilization of initiatives
4 spearheaded by the Global Engagement Center
5 and the United States Agency for International
6 Development to counter Russian propaganda
7 and disinformation in the Black Sea region.

8 (4) REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY.—The strategy
9 established under subsection (a) shall promote re-
10 gional connectivity by sending high-level representa-
11 tives of the Department of State or other agency
12 partners to—

13 (A) the Black Sea region not less fre-
14 quently than twice a year; and

15 (B) major regional fora on infrastructure
16 and energy security, including the Three Seas
17 Initiative Summit.

18 (d) IDENTIFICATION OF NECESSARY PROGRAMS AND
19 RESOURCES.—Not later than 360 days after the date of
20 the enactment of this Act, the interagency shall identify
21 any necessary program, policy, or budgetary resources re-
22 quired, by agency, to support implementation of the Black
23 Sea Security Strategy for fiscal years 2024, 2025, and
24 2026.

1 (e) RESPONSIBILITIES OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS
2 AND AGENCIES.—Nothing under this section shall be
3 deemed to authorize the National Security Council to as-
4 sume any of the responsibilities or authorities of the head
5 of any Federal department, agency, or office, including the
6 foreign affairs responsibilities and authorities of the Sec-
7 retary of State, to oversee the implementation of programs
8 and policies under this section.

9 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act:

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

14 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations,
15 the Committee on Armed Services, and the
16 Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;
17 and

18 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the
19 Committee on Armed Services, and the Com-
20 mittee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
21 resentatives.

22 (2) BLACK SEA STATES.—The term “Black Sea
23 states” means Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova,
24 Ukraine, and Georgia.