

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4491

To enhance diplomatic engagement on international biotechnology and  
biosecurity matters.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 12, 2026

Mr. SHEEHY (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## A BILL

To enhance diplomatic engagement on international  
biotechnology and biosecurity matters.

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 “Biodefense Diplomacy  
5       Enhancement Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. ENHANCEMENT OF DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT ON**  
7                       **INTERNATIONAL BIODEFENSE, BIOSECURITY,**  
8                       **AND BIOTECHNOLOGY MATTERS.**

9       (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall ad-  
10       vance United States foreign policy goals to improve co-

1 operation in the field of international biodefense, biosecu-  
2 rity, and biotechnology matters with United States allies  
3 and partners, including by carrying out the activities de-  
4 scribed in this section.

5 (b) POLICY DEVELOPMENT.—The Secretary of State,  
6 acting through the Under Secretary for Arms Control and  
7 International Security if the Secretary so delegates, in co-  
8 ordination with the Under Secretary for Political Affairs  
9 and the Permanent Representative of the United States  
10 to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), shall  
11 pursue enhanced biodefense cooperation within NATO, in-  
12 cluding by—

13 (1) advocating for the prioritization of policy  
14 development within NATO relating to biodefense, in-  
15 cluding in the areas of biotechnology, biosurveillance,  
16 and countermeasures in the field of biological  
17 threats;

18 (2) identifying and evaluating opportunities to  
19 strengthen NATO planning, policies, and activities  
20 relating to biodefense and biotechnology;

21 (3) pursuing potential revisions or amendments  
22 to the NATO Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and  
23 Nuclear Defence Policy to further enhance bio-  
24 defense efforts in NATO;

1           (4) coordinating with NATO member states to  
2       prioritize and implement measures described in the  
3       NATO Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nu-  
4       clear Defence Policy;

5           (5) strengthening NATO interoperability and  
6       allied forces capabilities in resilience, detection, at-  
7       tribution, emergency response, and recovery in the  
8       event of a weaponized biological attack;

9           (6) evaluating opportunities for expanded  
10      NATO capabilities to research, develop, and deploy  
11      biotechnology for international security purposes;  
12      and

13          (7) promoting adherence by NATO member  
14      states to the highest standards of safety and secu-  
15      rity in biological research.

16      (c) COOPERATION WITH UNITED STATES ALLIES  
17      AND PARTNERS.—The Secretary of State, acting through  
18      the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International  
19      Security if the Secretary so delegates, in coordination with  
20      the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, shall pursue  
21      international biotechnology, biosecurity, and biodefense  
22      cooperation with United States allies and partners, includ-  
23      ing—

1           (1) exploring potential areas of cooperation with  
2           countries that are major non-NATO allies in bio-  
3           technology, biosecurity, and biodefense matters;

4           (2) coordinating with allied and partner coun-  
5           tries, including NATO countries, on formulation of  
6           export control policies in the field of biotechnology,  
7           including items that may be identified as dual-use  
8           items that would pose a substantial risk to national  
9           security if used for military end-uses, such as items  
10          that could enable the development of bioweapons;

11          (3) promoting adherence by United States allies  
12          and partners to the highest standards of safety and  
13          security in biological research; and

14          (4) collaborating on efforts to enforce the Bio-  
15          logical Weapons Convention.

16          (d) STRATEGIES.—

17               (1) NATO BIODEFENSE STRATEGY.—The Sec-  
18               retary of State, acting through the Under Secretary  
19               for Arms Control and International Security if the  
20               Secretary so delegates, in coordination with the  
21               Under Secretary for Political Affairs, shall develop a  
22               strategy, to be known as the “NATO Biodefense  
23               Strategy”, which shall include—

24                       (A) an assessment of current cooperation  
25                       between the United States and NATO member

1 states in biotechnology, biosurveillance, biologi-  
2 cal threat countermeasures, and other bio-  
3 defense capabilities;

4 (B) an identification of strategic planning  
5 and deployment gaps in NATO relating to bio-  
6 technology and biodefense;

7 (C) recommendations to address gaps iden-  
8 tified under subparagraph (B), including  
9 through coordination with NATO member  
10 states, capability development, and coordination  
11 mechanisms; and

12 (D) an assessment of current Department  
13 of State cooperation with other United States  
14 Government agencies in biodefense, bio-  
15 technology, biosecurity, biosurveillance, and bio-  
16 logical threat countermeasures.

17 (2) INTERNATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY, BIO-  
18 SECURITY, AND BIODEFENSE COOPERATION STRAT-  
19 EGY.—The Secretary of State, acting through the  
20 Under Secretary for Arms Control and International  
21 Security if the Secretary so delegates, in coordina-  
22 tion with the Under Secretary for Political Affairs,  
23 shall develop a strategy, to be known as the “Inter-  
24 national Biotechnology, Biosecurity, and Biodefense  
25 Cooperation Strategy”, which shall include—

1 (A) proposals for commitments or agree-  
2 ments under which the United States and  
3 United States allies and partners, including  
4 countries that are major non-NATO allies, may  
5 expand cooperation on international security  
6 matters relating to biotechnology, biosecurity,  
7 and biodefense;

8 (B) an assessment of the feasibility and ef-  
9 fectiveness of coordinating export control ef-  
10 forts, in addition to existing export control re-  
11 gimes such as the Wassenaar Arrangement and  
12 the Australia Group, related to biotechnology  
13 items that may pose national security risks if  
14 used for military end-uses; and

15 (C) an overview of nonproliferation, anti-  
16 terrorism, demining, and related (NADR) pro-  
17 grams and funds for the purposes of enhancing  
18 capabilities and capacities to address inter-  
19 national biosecurity threats and recommenda-  
20 tions for the use of Department of State pro-  
21 grams and funds, including NADR programs  
22 and funds, to expand cooperation outlined in  
23 subparagraph (A) and increase the effectiveness  
24 of export control efforts identified in subpara-  
25 graph (B).

1           (3) LIMITATION.—The strategies developed  
2           under paragraphs (1) and (2) shall be limited to ad-  
3           dressing threats posed by biological agents and tox-  
4           ins as such terms are defined in section 178 of title  
5           18, United States Code.

6           (e) REPORT.—

7           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days  
8           after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
9           retary of State, acting through the Under Secretary  
10          for Arms Control and International Security if the  
11          Secretary so delegates, shall submit to the appro-  
12          priate congressional committees a report that con-  
13          tains the strategies required by subsection (d).

14          (2) FORM.—The report required by this sub-  
15          section shall be submitted in unclassified form but  
16          may include a classified annex if submitted sepa-  
17          rately from the unclassified portion.

18          (f) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 90  
19          days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under  
20          Secretary for Arms Control and International Security  
21          shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congressional  
22          committees in response to significant developments relat-  
23          ing to—

24                 (1) the contents of the report required by sub-  
25          section (e); and

1           (2) other material developments in bio-  
2           technology and biosecurity globally that may affect  
3           United States national security interests.

4           (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

5           (1) the term “appropriate congressional com-  
6           mittees” means—

7                   (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of  
8                   the Senate; and

9                   (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of  
10                  the House of the Representatives.

11           (2) the term “biodefense” means actions to  
12           counter biological threats, reduce risks, and prepare  
13           for, respond to, and recover from biological inci-  
14           dents;

15           (3) the term “biological threat” means entities  
16           involved with, or a situation involving, a biological  
17           hazard that can potentially cause a biological inci-  
18           dent;

19           (4) the term “Biological Weapons Convention”  
20           means the Convention on the Prohibition of the De-  
21           velopment, Production and Stockpiling of Bacterio-  
22           logical and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction,  
23           done at Washington, London, and Moscow April 10,  
24           1972, and entered into force March 26, 1975;



1           (5) the term “biosecurity” means policies, prac-  
2           tices, and controls that reduce the risk of loss, theft,  
3           misuse, diversion of, or intentional unauthorized re-  
4           lease of biological materials;

5           (6) the term “biosurveillance” means the proc-  
6           ess of gathering, integrating, interpreting, and com-  
7           municating essential information and indications re-  
8           lated to all-hazard threats or disease activity affect-  
9           ing human, animal, plant, and environmental health  
10          to achieve early detection and provide early warning  
11          and contribute to overall situational awareness of  
12          the health aspects of a biological incident to support  
13          and enhance decisionmaking at all levels;

14          (7) the term “biotechnology” means the use of  
15          biological processes, organisms, or systems for man-  
16          ufacturing, research, or medical purposes, including  
17          genetic engineering, synthetic biology, and  
18          bioinformatics; and

19          (8) the term “countries that are major non-  
20          NATO allies” means countries designated pursuant  
21          to section 517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961  
22          (22 U.S.C. 2321k).

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