

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5160

To require the Secretary of State and relevant executive branch agencies to monitor and address gray-zone operations of the People’s Republic of China in the Indo-Pacific, to hold accountable gray-zone activities by national and international actors, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 29, 2026

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mrs. BLACKBURN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require the Secretary of State and relevant executive branch agencies to monitor and address gray-zone operations of the People’s Republic of China in the Indo-Pacific, to hold accountable gray-zone activities by national and international actors, 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 “Countering Gray-zone
5 Aggression by the People’s Republic of China Act”.

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

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

1 (1) gray-zone operations employed in the Indo-
2 Pacific region with the purpose of expanding Chi-
3 nese interest via coercion by the People's Republic of
4 China (PRC) is a growing threat to the United
5 States, national security, regional partners in the
6 Indo-Pacific and economic interests globally, with
7 the Indo-Pacific region and Taiwan being a vital
8 area of interest to the United States;

9 (2) gray-zone tactics are employed by the PRC
10 with the specific purpose of reunification with Tai-
11 wan through slow erosion of political cohesion, eco-
12 nomic independence and societal confidence without
13 kinetic escalation, among other objectives;

14 (3) gray-zone tactics are becoming increasingly
15 prevalent in the Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific
16 region with the increased incursions of Chinese ves-
17 sels in national waters, airspace incursions,
18 cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and eco-
19 nomic coercion, in which Taiwan and the Philippines
20 are identified as main targets;

21 (4) the PRC is continuously increasing the
22 scope of targets and disputed territories in the Pa-
23 cific, broadening the list of target territories beyond
24 Taiwan and the Philippines;

1 (5) PRC-Russia gray-zone tactic coordination is
2 becoming an increasing security risk for the United
3 States in both the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific,
4 with the involvement of Chinese vessels in cable
5 breakages in Europe, and Russian vessels near Tai-
6 wan;

7 (6) the United States Indo-Pacific allies and
8 partners find themselves at the forefront of aggres-
9 sion by the PRC, which they cannot effectively
10 counter without substantive intelligence sharing, co-
11 ordination, and publicization of PRC aggression,
12 which can be further supplemented by United States
13 coordination;

14 (7) the United States Government should re-
15 double efforts to hold the PRC accountable, includ-
16 ing partnering with non-governmental groups who
17 are documenting and exposing the PRC's coercive
18 and destabilizing activities, for the purpose of deter-
19 rence; and

20 (8) to effectively address PRC use of gray-zone
21 tactics, the United States Government should work
22 with partner governments, civil society experts, and
23 private stakeholders to improve information sharing,
24 strengthen preventative measures, raise public

1 awareness, and increase coordination on regional law
2 enforcement.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—In this Act:

5 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
6 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
7 mittees” means—

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

10 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
11 the House of Representatives;

12 (2) GRAY-ZONE TACTICS.—The term “gray-zone
13 tactics” means the use of activities, short of open
14 warfare, to advance a state’s interests by maxi-
15 mizing advancement while avoiding kinetic military
16 responses, including a mix of diplomatic, economic,
17 informational and paramilitary tools.

18 (3) STRATEGY.—The term “Strategy” means
19 the strategy to monitor and counter gray-zone tac-
20 tics and hold the PRC accountable required under
21 section 4.

22 (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The definitions under
23 this section are exclusive to this Act and may not be con-
24 strued to affect any other provision of United States law.

1 **SEC. 4. STRATEGY TO ENHANCE AND ENACT THE MONI-**
2 **TORING OF CHINESE GRAY-ZONE ACTIVITIES**
3 **WITHIN THE INDO-PACIFIC.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
5 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in
6 consultation with the Assistant Secretary of State for In-
7 telligence and Research, the Attorney General, the heads
8 of intelligence community agencies, and the heads of other
9 Federal departments and agencies, shall submit to the ap-
10 propriate congressional committees a comprehensive strat-
11 egy (in this section referred to as the “Strategy”) that—

12 (1) is designed to monitor and make public
13 gray-zone tactics used by the PRC to the detriment
14 of our allies and partners, as a means of exposing
15 PRC methods and limiting their damage;

16 (2) consults with the intelligence community on
17 best practices of increasing intelligence sharing;

18 (3) is global in scope; and

19 (4) may prioritize efforts focused on the PRC
20 activities in the Indo-Pacific region and the Taiwan
21 Strait.

22 (b) CONTENTS.—The Strategy shall—

23 (1) provide an assessment of gaps in capabili-
24 ties or resourcing regarding our ability to monitor
25 PRC gray zone activities in the Indo-Pacific;

1 (2) outline a list of territories or areas currently
2 impacted by or imminently vulnerable to PRC gray-
3 zone operations with an assessment the capabilities
4 of United States allies and partners to respond, and
5 describe the status of efforts to engage with these
6 partners at governmental and local levels;

7 (3) identify all active, relevant United States
8 foreign assistance programs and diplomatic efforts
9 underway to mitigate and counter gray-zone tactics;

10 (4) identify, if applicable, any additional capa-
11 bilities or resources inherent to allies and partners,
12 the private sector, or academia that would enhance
13 the response to PRC gray-zone activities;

14 (5) outline additional resources or authorities
15 needed to adequately counter PRC gray-zone activi-
16 ties and any obstacles to responding to gray-zone
17 tactic incidents;

18 (6) outline an action plan for how the Federal
19 Government will monitor, prevent, and deter PRC
20 gray-zone activities, including in coordination with
21 allies and partners, including strategic efforts to
22 raise awareness and public exposure of PRC gray-
23 zone activities; and

24 (7) establish objectives and performance indica-
25 tors to achieve this strategy.

1 (c) LIMITATION.—Nothing in the Strategy may af-
 2 fect, apply to, or create obligations related to past,
 3 present, or future criminal or civil law enforcement or in-
 4 telligence activities of the United States or the law en-
 5 forcement activities of any State or subdivision of a State.

6 (d) CLASSIFICATION.—The Strategy shall be unclas-
 7 sified but may include a classified annex.

8 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO IMPLEMENT THE**
 9 **STRATEGY.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after sub-
 11 mitting the Strategy pursuant to section 4(a), the Sec-
 12 retary of State, in consultation with the Attorney General,
 13 the Secretary of the Treasury, and the heads of other Fed-
 14 eral departments and agencies, shall establish an inter-
 15 agency task force (referred to in this section as the “Task
 16 Force”)—

17 (1) to coordinate the implementation of the
 18 Strategy;

19 (2) to conduct and enhance regular monitoring
 20 and analysis of gray-zone operations internationally;

21 (3) to track, formulate and strengthen tools for
 22 the purpose of countering and mitigating gray-zone
 23 operations internationally, including determining and
 24 reporting funding requirements;

1 (4) to track and evaluate progress toward the
2 objectives, activities, and performance indicators of
3 the Strategy described in section 4(b)(5); and

4 (5) to update the Strategy, in consultation with
5 the appropriate congressional committees, as needed.

6 (b) ANNUAL REVIEWS AND REPORTS.—Not later
7 than 1 year after the establishment of the Task Force,
8 and not less frequently than annually thereafter, the Sec-
9 retary of State and the Attorney General, in consultation
10 with the Secretary of the Treasury and the heads of other
11 Federal departments and agencies, shall—

12 (1) conduct a status review of the Strategy and
13 the overall state gray-zone operations by the PRC in
14 the Indo-Pacific;

15 (2) include a list of impacted allies and part-
16 ners, as well as actors who may be enabling the
17 PRC’s gray zone activity in the Indo-Pacific; and

18 (3) submit the results of such review in a public
19 report to the appropriate congressional committees,
20 which may contain a classified annex.

21 (c) TASK FORCE TERMINATION.—The Task Force
22 shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date
23 on which it is established.

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