

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1632

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

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

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 security, prosperity, and
18 stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

19 (4) The United States has committed to con-
20 tinuing to deepen longstanding alliances and part-
21 nerships with a range of Southeast Asian nations,
22 including by promoting our shared values, democ-
23 racy, human rights, and 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 capac-
4 ity and capability to address common challenges.

5 (6) ASEAN member states are critical United
6 States security partners in preventing violent extre-
7 mism and protecting the freedom and openness of
8 the maritime domain and in preventing the traf-
9 ficking of 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 re-
25 cently celebrated the 40th anniversary of their ties

1 and established a new strategic partnership that will
2 enhance cooperation across the economic, political-
3 security, and people-to-people pillars of the relation-
4 ship.

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

6 It is the policy of the United States to—

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

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

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

17 (A) the role and importance of Southeast
18 Asia to the United States;

19 (B) the value of the United States-ASEAN
20 relationship;

21 (C) the mutual interests of all parties;

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

1 (E) efforts to forge and maintain ASEAN
2 consensus, especially on key issues of political
3 and security concern to the region, such as the
4 South China Sea.

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

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

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

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

19 (2) A description of efforts to—

20 (A) deepen and expand Southeast Asian al-
21 liances, partnerships, and multilateral engage-
22 ments, including efforts to expand broad based
23 and inclusive economic growth, security ties, se-
24 curity cooperation and interoperability, eco-
25 nomic connectivity, and expand opportunities

1 for ASEAN to work with other like-minded
2 partners in the region; and

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

6 (3) A summary of initiatives across the whole
7 of the United States Government to strengthen the
8 United States partnership with Southeast Asian na-
9 tions and ASEAN, including to promote broad based
10 and inclusive economic growth, trade, investment,
11 energy and efforts to combat climate change, public-
12 private partnerships, physical and digital infrastruc-
13 ture development, education, disaster management,
14 public health and economic and political diplomacy
15 in Southeast Asia.

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

22 (5) A summary of initiatives across the whole
23 of the United States Government to promote human
24 rights and democracy, to strengthen the rule of law,
25 civil society, and transparent governance, and to

1 protect the integrity of elections from outside influ-
2 ence.

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

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

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

15 (c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-
16 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-
17 sional committees” means—

18 (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
19 Committee on Armed Services of the House of Rep-
20 resentatives; and

1 (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
2 the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

Passed the House of Representatives September 24,
2019.

Attest: **CHERYL L. JOHNSON,**
Clerk.