

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4491

To enhance diplomatic engagement on international biotechnology and
biosecurity matters.

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

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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