

This authorization aims to push back against CCP efforts to dominate the 5G and future generations telecommunications networks of our strategic allies and partners in the region, many of whom are NATO allies.

Ensuring the security of the telecommunications network of our NATO allies and partners in Central and Eastern Europe is unquestionably in the U.S. national security interest.

Moreover, this bill targets the majority of countries in the Three Seas Initiative. Launched by 12 of our close friends in Central and Eastern Europe, the Three Seas Initiative seeks to expand cross-border energy, transportation, and digital infrastructure, as well as boost economic development in the region. Though it is a regional initiative, it has global implications that serve not only European but U.S. security and economic interests.

We in Congress have expressed great concern that CCP is exporting corruption, debt traps, and poor labor and environmental standards to Europe and across the world through its 17+1 and Belt and Road initiatives. The Three Seas Initiative seeks to address these concerns by providing positive alternatives to PRC investments in the region, including in its 5G and future telecom networks.

The last administration successfully convinced most of Central and Eastern Europe to opt not to use high-risk Chinese suppliers in their telecommunications networks. Supporting the Three Seas Initiative's efforts to expand secure digital infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe will carry forward this major foreign policy success and ensures the transatlantic community remains united in its clear-eyed assessment of the threat the CCP poses to telecommunications security.

In addition, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine must serve as a wake-up call to the dangers of allowing our adversaries to expand their influence in critical sectors of our economies. In particular, Europe's energy dependence on Russia has made it difficult to rally the continent around tougher sanctions and is funding the Kremlin's war machine to the tune of about \$1 billion every day. This is not in Europe's or the United States' national security interests.

We cannot wait for a potential conflict over Taiwan to assist our closest allies and partners in Europe and beyond in cutting out the CCP's malign influence now that it has been used to gain leverage over our democratic allies. This bill would help ensure we learn from our collective past mistakes.

Lastly, this bill is important because it directs the Secretary of State to appoint a campaign director among existing personnel for the upcoming election at the International Telecommunications Union, the ITU, which sets global standards for technologies such as 5G.

Russia's campaign to elect a Russian national who is a former Huawei execu-

tive to serve as the secretary general of the ITU is indicative of Russia's and China's efforts to use international organizations to promote their interests and malign influence.

The United States should ensure that we are coordinated in driving support for the U.S. candidate, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, for the secretary general of the ITU, but the State Department should also engage on the important down-ballot races at the ITU.

There are four other posts of significance within the ITU's leadership structure, including the director of the ITU Development Sector, the ITU-D. The ITU-D plays a particularly vital role in supporting multilateral cooperation for fair and open internet governance through trustworthy deployment of digital technologies in the developing world.

The U.S. must be doing everything we can to ensure Russian and Chinese malign influence does not grow. This bill would help.

The Three Seas Initiative seeks to address threats posed by the CCP by providing positive alternatives to PRC investments in the region, including in its 5G and future telecoms networks.

We must support our allies in Central and Eastern Europe as they seek, through the Three Seas Initiative, to reduce their dependence on Moscow's and Beijing's economic overtures. Only together can we face the threats posed by the authoritarian regimes in China and Russia.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, again, I thank my friend for his leadership and bipartisanship on this critical piece of legislation. I think it is timely. I think it is urgent. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3344, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

#### COUNTERING MALIGN RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA ACT

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7311) to direct the Secretary of State to develop and submit to Congress a strategy and implementation plan outlining United States efforts to counter the malign influence and ac-

tivities of the Russian Federation and its proxies in Africa, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7311

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act".

#### SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the United States—

(1) should regularly assess the scale and scope of the Russian Federation's influence and activities in Africa that undermine United States objectives and interests; and

(2) determine how—

(A) to address and counter such influence and activities effectively, including through appropriate United States foreign assistance programs; and

(B) to hold accountable the Russian Federation and African governments and their officials who are complicit in aiding such malign influence and activities.

#### SEC. 3. STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN; REPORT.

(a) STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall develop and submit to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy and implementation plan outlining United States efforts to counter the malign influence and activities of the Russian Federation and its proxies in Africa, including programs and other initiatives designed to—

(1) strengthen democratic institutions, improve government transparency and accountability, improve standards related to human rights, labor, anti-corruption initiatives, fiscal transparency, monitor natural resources and extractive industries, and other tenets of good governance; and

(2) monitor and report on Russian political influence and disinformation operations and the activities of Russian, Russia-connected, or Russian-funded private military contractors in Africa.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 5 years, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies as appropriate, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the strategy and implementation plan required by subsection (a) and related efforts to counter the malign influence and activities of the Russian Federation and its proxies in Africa.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the scope and nature of the Russian Federation's malign influence and activities and related diplomatic, economic, and security priorities and strategic objectives of such engagement in Africa, including influence and activities that involve Russian proxies, such as Russian oligarchs, Russian-funded private military contractors, and other individuals and entities directly or indirectly employed by or financially or politically associated with Russia and its officials, who are involved in or aid activities to, among other things—

(i) manipulate African governments and their policies, as well as the public opinions and voting preferences of African populations and diaspora groups, including those in the United States; and

(ii) invest in, engage, or otherwise control strategic sectors in Africa, such as mining

and other forms of natural resource extraction and exploitation, military basing and other security cooperation agreements, and information and communications technology.

(B) A detailed account of United States foreign assistance and other initiatives developed and implemented during the preceding 3 fiscal years to address Russia's malign influence and activities in Africa, including the objectives and details of planned programs and initiatives set out in the strategy required by subsection (a).

(C) An analysis of policy and programmatic limitations, gaps, and resource requirements to effectively counter Russia's malign influence and activities in Africa.

(D) An overview of other initiatives and assistance programs funded by other international donors and partner countries to counter Russia's malign influence and activities in Africa.

(E) An identification of African governments and government officials, Russian government officials, and other individuals and entities that have facilitated payments and other prohibited activities that benefit United States-sanctioned individuals and entities tied to Russia, including in violation of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114-328; 22 U.S.C. 2656 note), the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (Public Law 115-44; 22 U.S.C. 9401 et seq.), Executive Order 14024 (86 Fed. Reg. 20249; relating to blocking property with respect to specified harmful foreign activities of the Government of the Russian Federation), and Executive Order 13848 (83 Fed. Reg. 46843; relating to imposing certain sanctions in the event of foreign interference in a United States election), and a detailed overview of United States efforts to hold such governments, officials, and other individuals and entities complicit in violating or facilitating the evasion of United States sanctions against Russia and its proxies accountable through sanctions or other restrictions.

(F) An identification of foreign companies and persons that have provided transportation, logistical, administrative, border crossing, or money transfer services to Russian mercenaries or armed forces operating on behalf of the Russian Government in Libya, and an analysis of whether such entities meet the criteria for imposition of sanctions under section 1(a) of Executive Order 13726 (81 Fed. Reg. 23559; relating to blocking property and suspending entry into the United States of persons contributing to the situation in Libya).

(3) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

#### SEC. 4. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.

In this Act, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

- (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and
- (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCEACHIN). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER) each will control 20 minutes.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 7311, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7311, the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act, as amended, introduced by Representative GREGORY MEEKS, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

As Putin pursues a violent, illegal, and unjustifiable war in the sovereign nation of Ukraine, we must remember that he is also destabilizing fragile states in Africa to feed his ruthless war machine.

As a matter of fact, the Russian Federation has conducted malign activities throughout Africa for several years now to raise funds and evade sanctions that would inevitably result from Putin's brutal war.

From troll farms that spread disinformation to unaccountable private military contractors, the Kremlin continues to destabilize parts of Africa in order to achieve its objectives regardless of consequences.

Those consequences are deadly and draining African governments of sorely needed resources. For example, Putin has used his network of oligarchs to deploy the Wagner Group mercenaries to countries like Mali and the Central African Republic, where allegations of human rights abuses such as mass executions, forced disappearances, torture, and other unspeakable acts are mounting every day by those groups.

That is why I call on my colleagues to support H.R. 7311, which would require the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a strategy and plan outlining U.S. efforts to counter Russia's malign activities on the continent of Africa that undermine U.S. interests.

It would also require the State Department to identify and hold accountable Russian and African officials who facilitate Russia's malign activities, including those that exploit the continent's natural resources and manipulate democratic processes in order to evade sanctions.

I am pleased to see the administration is taking several steps toward this end in recent days, including through designating several Russian companies involved in illicit activities in Africa that were, in essence, designed to evade sanctions.

With H.R. 7311, I am confident the State Department, with the support of our other Federal agencies, will help Congress develop a clear picture of what Putin is, in fact, doing in Africa and how we can effectively push back to protect our interests and those of our partners throughout the African region.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill and urge my colleagues to do the same. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7311 to require the State Department

to develop a strategy to counter Russian malign influence in Africa.

As the world continues to watch Russia commit unspeakable atrocities and war crimes in Ukraine, the U.S. and our allies and partners must fully assess the threat posed by Russian activities around the world.

This bill requires the State Department to assess the threat of Russia's engagement in Africa and create a plan to counter the Russian Federation's growing influence on the continent. In particular, the bill requires a specific focus on extractive industries, security assistance, and strategic basing agreements.

In Sudan, Russia is pursuing an agreement to establish a military base on the Red Sea. Russian mercenaries are also active in the Central African Republic, Mali, and Libya. While they claim to support stabilization efforts, in reality, they are committing gross violations of human rights and exploiting natural resources.

Just last month, Russian mercenaries were implicated in a massacre of over 200 people in Mali. This was the worst attack in Mali in over 10 years. Further reports indicate that they attempted to blame the atrocities on French forces after French intelligence footage showed Russian mercenaries burying victims' bodies outside of a former French military base.

Putin's complicity in these atrocities and war crimes around the world, and disinformation campaigns to avoid accountability, cannot go unanswered. I strongly condemn these attacks and the destabilizing role of Russia across the continent and the world.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Chairman MEEKS and Ranking Member McCAUL, as well as Chairwoman BASS and Ranking Member SMITH on the Subcommittee for Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights, for offering this important measure.

The assessment and strategy required by the bill is an important first step, but the U.S. must do more to counter Russian malign activity wherever it is present, and the atrocities and war crimes ongoing in Ukraine further underscore the urgency.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues again to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend again for his leadership and bipartisanship on this bill. I think it is a very important bill because Russia is spreading its malign influence all over the world, and it is having a particular impact in the African continent, so we need to be prepared. We need to respond. This bill will help do that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak in support of Chairman MEEKS' Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act, of which I am an original cosponsor.

While so much of the world's attention is rightfully focused on Russia's atrocities in Ukraine, Vladimir Putin and his minions are also at work elsewhere around the world.

This is especially true in Africa, where we see the extensive presence of Russian Private Military Contractors, or PMCs, in particular the notorious Wagner Group, and extensive Russian entanglement in countries with mining and strategic mineral reserves.

In some cases, such as in the Central African Republic, we see mines guarded by Wagner Group mercenaries. Wagner Group PMCs are said to have also appeared recently in Sudan, where there had been earlier reports of Russia seeking a naval base.

We have also seen Wagner mercenaries implicated in atrocities in Mali, which seems to have taken a bizarre turn recently, with France accusing Russia of staging a false flag operation seeking to implicate the French.

Thus, the Chairman's bill is especially timely, and can serve as a template for other bills addressing Russian involvement around the world, including the Western Hemisphere, as came up during our markup.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7311, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

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## CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4133) to authorize appropriations for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, enhance the United States-Caribbean security partnership, prioritize disaster resilience, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4133

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Authorization Act".

### SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE.

(a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—There is authorized to be appropriated \$74,800,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 to carry out the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative to achieve the purposes described in subsection (b).

(b) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes described in this subsection are the following:

(1) To promote citizen safety, security, and the rule of law in the Caribbean through in-

creased strategic engagement with the governments of beneficiary countries and with elements of local civil society, including the private sector, in such countries.

(2) To carry out the promotion of such safety, security, and the rule of law through efforts including the following:

(A) Capacity building for law enforcement and military units, including professionalization, anti-corruption and human rights training, vetting, and community-based policing.

(B) Maritime and aerial security cooperation, including assistance to strengthen Caribbean maritime and aerial interdiction operations capability and the provision of support systems and equipment, training, and maintenance.

(C) Border and port security cooperation, including support to strengthen capacity for screening and to intercept narcotics, weapons, bulk cash, and other contraband at airports and seaports.

(D) Support for justice sector reform and strengthening of the rule of law, including capacity building for prosecutors, judges, and other justice officials, and support to increase the efficacy of criminal courts.

(E) Cybersecurity and cybercrime cooperation, including capacity-building and support for cybersecurity systems.

(F) Countering transnational criminal organizations and local gang activity, including capacity-building, equipment, and support for operations targeting the finances and illegal activities of transnational criminal networks and local gangs such as their recruitment of at-risk youth, and the provision of assistance to populations vulnerable to being victims of extortion and crime by criminal networks.

(G) Strengthening special prosecutorial offices and providing technical assistance to combat corruption, money laundering, financial crimes, extortion, and human rights crimes, and conduct asset forfeitures and criminal analysis.

(H) Strengthening the ability of the security sector to respond to and become more resilient in the face of natural disasters, including by carrying out training exercises to ensure critical infrastructure and ports are able to come back online rapidly following disasters and providing preparedness training to police and first responders.

(I) Supporting training for civilian police and appropriate security services in criminal investigations, best practices for citizen security, and the protection of human rights.

(J) Improving community and law enforcement cooperation to improve effectiveness and professionalism of police and increase mutual trust.

(K) Increasing economic opportunities for at-risk youth and vulnerable populations, including workforce development training and remedial education programs for at-risk youth.

(L) Improving juvenile justice sectors through regulatory reforms, separating youth from traditional prison systems, and improving support and services in juvenile detention centers.

(3) To prioritize efforts to combat corruption and include anti-corruption components to programs, including by—

(A) strengthening national justice systems and attorneys general and supporting independent media and investigative reporting;

(B) supporting multilateral anti-corruption mechanisms; and

(C) encouraging cooperative agreements between the Department of State, other relevant Federal departments and agencies, and the attorneys general of relevant countries to fight corruption in the Caribbean.

(4) To promote the rule of law in the Caribbean and counter malign influence from au-

thoritarian regimes, including China and Russia, by:

(A) Monitoring security assistance from authoritarian regimes and taking steps necessary to ensure that this assistance does not undermine or jeopardize U.S. security assistance.

(B) Evaluating and, as appropriate, restricting United States involvement in investment and infrastructure projects financed by authoritarian regimes that might obstruct or otherwise impact United States security assistance to beneficiary countries.

(C) Monitoring and restricting equipment and support from high risk vendors for telecommunications infrastructure in beneficiary countries.

(D) Countering disinformation by promoting transparency and accountability from beneficiary countries.

(E) Eliminating corruption linked to investment and infrastructure facilitated by authoritarian regimes through support for investment screening, competitive tendering and bidding processes, the implementation of investment law, and contractual transparency.

(5) To promote strategic engagement with the governments of beneficiary countries through effective branding and messaging of United States assistance and security cooperation, including by developing a public diplomacy strategy for educating citizens of beneficiary countries about United States assistance and security cooperation programs and benefits.

### SEC. 3. STRATEGY TO IMPROVE DISASTER RESILIENCE.

(a) **PRIORITIZATION.**—During the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Inter-American Foundation, prioritize efforts to increase disaster response and resilience by carrying out programs in beneficiary countries for the following purposes:

(1) Encouraging coordination between beneficiary countries and relevant Federal departments and agencies to provide expertise and information sharing.

(2) Supporting sharing of best practices on disaster resilience including constructing resilient infrastructure and rebuilding after natural disasters.

(3) Improving rapid-response mechanisms and cross-government organizational preparedness for natural disasters.

(b) **STRATEGY.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and in consultation with the President and Chief Economic Officer of the Inter-American Foundation, submit to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy that incorporates specific, measurable benchmarks to achieve the purposes described in subsection (a) and to inform citizens of beneficiary countries about the extent and benefits of United States assistance to such countries. In developing such strategy, the Secretary of State shall also consult with nongovernmental organizations in beneficiary countries and in the United States.

(c) **ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE.**—The Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator, shall annually submit to the appropriate congressional committees a written description of the progress made as of the date of such submission in meeting the benchmarks included in the strategy submitted pursuant to subsection (b).