

this measure. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, our Afghan allies risked their lives for America. The United States must continue to do everything it can to support our partners on the ground providing assistance to Afghan civilians, including women and children, while also ensuring U.S. foreign assistance isn't being diverted into the hands of the Taliban.

There remain considerable areas of bipartisan consensus in Congress when it comes to our Afghanistan policy. This legislation will lean on that consensus to help bolster our committee's oversight power and take a step toward delivering to our Afghan allies the support that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me and support this bill. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the kind words that Representative JACKSON said about me. He is probably one of my closest friends across the aisle. I don't agree with him on anything, but he is my friend and I dig that.

Mr. Speaker, we must send a very strong message that the United States will no longer tolerate sending U.S. tax dollars to terrorist organizations in Afghanistan and across the Middle East.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 260, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to require a strategy to oppose foreign assistance by foreign countries and nongovernmental organizations to the Taliban, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SANCTION SEA PIRATES ACT OF 2025

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1998) to require the imposition of sanctions with respect to foreign persons engaged in piracy, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1998

*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 "Sanction Sea Pirates Act of 2025".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In 2011, there were 212 attempted attacks against vessels off of the Somali coast, more than 1,000 crew were held hostage, and 35 seafarers were killed.

(2) Over the past decade through the beginning of 2023, rates of piracy in the Western Indian Ocean subsided.

(3) Houthi attacks against commercial vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since the Hamas terrorist attack against Israel on October 7th have impacted global shipping markets.

(4) There has been a surge in Somali pirate attacks, beginning in the fall of 2023 and lasting into 2024, that has coincided with and taken advantage of Houthi aggression.

#### SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States Government should seek to stop piracy all around the world, including off the Somali Coast and in the Gulf of Aden; and

(2) the United States should seek to work with allies and partners around the globe to combat piracy around the globe and to curb the surge in piracy off of the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

#### SEC. 4. SANCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person the President determines knowingly engages in piracy.

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) ASSET BLOCKING.—Notwithstanding the requirements of section 202 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701), the President may exercise of all powers granted to the President by that Act to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of the foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, is described in subsection (a) is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible for a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall, in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)), revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien described in subparagraph (A) regardless of when the visa or other entry documentation is issued.

(ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under clause (i)—

(I) shall take effect immediately; and

(II) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

(c) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS.—Sanctions under

subsection (b)(2) shall not apply with respect to the admission of an alien if admitting or paroling the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(2) EXCEPTION RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.—Sanctions under this section may not be imposed with respect to transactions or the facilitation of transactions for—

(A) the sale of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, or medical devices;

(B) the provision of humanitarian assistance;

(C) financial transactions relating to humanitarian assistance; or

(D) transporting goods or services that are necessary to carry out operations relating to humanitarian assistance.

(3) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply to any authorized intelligence, law enforcement, or national security activities of the United States.

(d) CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—In any judicial review of a determination made under this section, if the determination was based on classified information (as defined in section 1(a) of the Classified Information Procedures Act) such information may be submitted to the reviewing court ex parte and in camera. This subsection may not be construed to confer or imply any right to judicial review.

(e) IMPLEMENTATION; PENALTIES.—

(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided to the President under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this section.

(2) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations promulgated to carry out this section to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in section 206(a) of that Act.

(f) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of sanctions imposed with respect to a foreign person under this section if the President certifies to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate not later than 15 days before such waiver is to take effect that the waiver is crucial to the national security interests of the United States.

(g) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The authorities and requirements to impose sanctions authorized under this section shall not include the authority or requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(2) GOOD DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "good" means any article, natural or man-made substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term "foreign person" means an individual or entity that is not a United States person.

(2) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term "United States person" means—

(A) a United States citizen;

(B) a permanent resident alien of the United States; or

(C) an entity organized under the laws of the United States or of any jurisdiction within the United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity.

(3) PIRACY.—The term “piracy” means any act in violation of one or more provisions of chapter 81 of title 18, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURCHETT. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1998, the Sanction Sea Pirates Act, introduced by my dear friend Representative JACKSON.

This legislation is a strong statement of intent that Congress will not tolerate the sea piracy which threatens trade across the globe. By modern standards, sea piracy may seem like an age-old problem, but the reality is it is very brutal. Sea piracy is a violent crime that endangers the lives of merchant sailors, disrupts global trade, and can cause massive economic losses.

America has long stood strong against sea piracy. However, in recent years, piracy has been on the rise. Mr. Speaker, Pirates, often based out of Somalia, have taken advantage of disruptions created by Houthi aggression in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The result has been a disturbing spike in pirate attacks in the waters surrounding the Horn of Africa.

This bill uses economic power to support ongoing military efforts by the U.S. and its partners to combat piracy and safeguard trade in this vital strategic waterway. The bill imposes full financial and visa sanctions against any foreign person who engages in piracy.

By leveraging the economic power of the United States to supplement the work of our Armed Forces, we can help end sea piracy and ensure the safety of our merchant sailors. I support this legislation and reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
Washington, DC, June 16, 2025.

Hon. BRIAN MAST,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MAST: I write regarding H.R. 1998, the Sanction Sea Pirates Act of 2025. Provisions of this bill fall within the Judiciary Committee's Rule X jurisdiction, and I appreciate that you consulted with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee agrees that it shall be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that

it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

The Committee takes this action with the understanding that forgoing further consideration of this measure does not in any way alter the Committee's jurisdiction or waive any future jurisdictional claim over these provisions or their subject matter. We also reserve the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees in the event of a conference with the Senate involving this measure or similar legislation.

I ask that you please insert this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 1998 on the House floor. I appreciate the cooperative manner in which our committees have worked on this matter, and I look forward to working collaboratively in the future on matters of shared jurisdiction. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

JIM JORDAN,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, June 23, 2025.

Hon. JIM JORDAN,  
Committee on the Judiciary,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1998, the Sanction Sea Pirates Act of 2025, so that the measure may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointments of any appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference of this legislation.

I will submit the exchange of letters to be published in the Congressional Record. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together on matters of shared jurisdiction during this Congress.

Sincerely,

BRIAN J. MAST,  
Chairman.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support my bill, H.R. 1998, Sanction Sea Pirates Act. Over the last few years, we have seen and also been reminded how fragile global supply chains can be and how the closing of narrow physical chokepoints can lead to shortages and inflation. More than 30 percent of global container trade passes through the Red Sea. If these waters cannot be navigated because of pirates and terrorism, Americans will continue to feel the costs here at home.

Unfortunately, we are now seeing exactly what we are trying to prevent. Ships traversing the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden now face two major threats—and more mounting—from the Houthis, who continue to perpetrate piracy on the high seas, and from Somali pirates, who are plundering and pillaging at rates unseen in a decade.

My bill imposes sanctions on any pirates around the world, blocking assets in or associated with the United States and denying them entry into our coun-

try. As an international leader in trade and security, the United States must seek to stop piracy around the world. This is America at its finest trying to help facilitate global trade. We must secure global waterways for the safety of ships, crew members, and critical ship-dependent supply chains.

Mr. Speaker, my bill is also a necessary step to ensure the development of African economies and generate greater prosperity through stability in Somalia. No country can be expected to grow and prosper while facing serious piracy threats. We cannot allow violent criminals and terrorists to continue stunting the economic development of Somalia and the surrounding region.

Beyond direct threats to the United States and Somalia, piracy is often linked to terrorism and crime. This bill reaffirms the United States' position as a global economic and security leader, and I thank my colleagues for helping to move this bill through the House. We strongly believe that this is a necessary step toward greater stability and safety for both the United States and East Africa. Attacks on maritime shipping endanger innocent lives, raise the cost of goods, and destabilize local communities in Yemen and the Horn of Africa.

For American national and economic security, we must pass this legislation and crack down on global piracy. I encourage all of my colleagues to join in supporting this legislation, and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, to advance global security and economic prosperity, the United States must seek to stop piracy around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I urge the body to pass the Sanction Sea Pirates Act and send an unmistakable message: The United States of America stands firmly against sea piracy and is committed to ensuring freedom of navigation against crime in the high seas. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1998, 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. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

# ASSESSMENT OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SUBMARINE FIBER OPTIC CABLE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1737) to direct the Secretary of Commerce to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1737

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

## SECTION 1. ASSESSMENT OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SUBMARINE FIBER OPTIC CABLE.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies as necessary, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, to enhance the national security of the United States.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include an assessment of—

(1) the digital security, national security, and economic opportunities associated with a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(2) the lifespan of submarine fiber optic cables currently connecting the United States Virgin Islands to the contiguous United States;

(3) the current security of telecommunications between the contiguous United States and the United States Virgin Islands;

(4) the readiness of telecommunications infrastructure in the United States Virgin Islands to support a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(5) the potential for engagement with trusted entities in the deployment of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a), and the associated geopolitical and economic advantages;

(6) the potential connectivity opportunities to maximize investments in the United States economy through the use of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(7) the value, cost, and feasibility of establishing a data center and high-security cloud services facility, with independent power generation, in the United States Virgin Islands for communications of the United States Africa Command, communications of the United States Special Operations Command, and national security communications;

(8) the state of submarine fiber optic cables connected to United States telecommunications infrastructure; and

(9) any other related matters the Secretary determines are appropriate.

(c) NO MANDATORY DATA COLLECTION.—The Secretary may not require any entity to provide data for purposes of preparing the report required by subsection (a).

(d) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form without any designation relating to dissemination control, but may include a classified annex.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) NOT TRUSTED.—The term “not trusted” means, with respect to an entity, that the entity is determined by the Secretary to pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States, or the security and safety of United States persons, based solely on one or more determination described under paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 2(c) of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (47 U.S.C. 1601(c)).

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(3) TRUSTED.—The term “trusted” means, with respect to an entity, that the Secretary has not determined that the entity is not trusted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of H.R. 1737. I am advocating for this particular bill. The bill would direct the Secretary of Commerce to submit a report on the value, cost, and feasibility of developing a transatlantic submarine cable connecting the United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria.

Submarine cables are critical components of communications infrastructure, carrying data traffic across oceans. There are more than 600 active and planned submarine cable systems that keep the world connected, but there is no cable connecting the United States to the continent of Africa.

Mr. Speaker, a transatlantic submarine cable could provide national security benefits to the United States, given Africa's strategic importance, and it is an important issue to study, in my opinion.

I thank Delegate PLASKETT and Representative FULCHER for their leadership on this particular bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of H.R. 1737.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1430

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1737, a bill requiring the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA, to assess the value, cost, and feasibility of a transatlantic submarine fiber optic

cable connecting the United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, and to submit a report to Congress with its findings.

The bill also directs NTIA to report to Congress on the current state of telecommunications connecting the U.S. Virgin Islands and the United States, including an assessment of the lifespan and security of telecommunications infrastructure linking the two.

This legislation will provide Congress with vital information on the strength and resiliency of communications infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It will also help us determine whether American interests can be served by connecting the U.S. and the African Continent with undersea cable infrastructure by way of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This bill is an important step to enhance American communications security and competitiveness around the world.

In recent years, Mr. Speaker, the United States and many allies have recognized the threat posed by untrusted Chinese telecommunications equipment to our national security. Thanks to the work of the Energy and Commerce Committee and Congress, we have taken steps to remove suspect equipment and software from American communications networks to protect against sabotage and undue influence by our adversaries.

Much of this work has been done on a bipartisan basis. One noteworthy example is the legislation Congress passed to force the divestment of TikTok from ownership by companies controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, which passed overwhelmingly with hundreds of Democratic and Republican votes.

That is why I was frustrated to learn last week that President Trump again unlawfully granted TikTok an extension, allowing China to infiltrate American networks for another 90 days. President Trump's disregard for the law is well known at this point, but I was more disappointed that none of my Republican colleagues had the courage to call on the President to enforce the law.

Trump's stall tactics are allowing China to continue to collect massive amounts of information on Americans. There are American companies that want to buy TikTok. It is long past time for Trump to get this done.

There is also still work to be done because network security does not end at the water's edge. For decades, China and other adversaries have spent considerable time and money to deploy suspect telecommunications equipment and infrastructure across the African Continent. The assessment required in this bill is an important step to understand the cost of securing the connection between the United States and our African allies and how best to ensure a critical global communications channel is protected from the prying eyes of our adversaries.