

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3547

To require the United States Government to assist in the establishment of national security councils in specified countries.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 14, 2023

Ms. ERNST (for herself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require the United States Government to assist in the establishment of national security councils in specified countries.

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 “Connecting Oceania’s
5 Nations with Vanguard Exercises and National Empower-
6 ment Act of 2023” or the “CONVENE Act of 2023”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

1 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
2 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
3 gress” means—

4 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations,
5 the Select Committee on Intelligence, the
6 Armed Services Committee, and the Committee
7 on Appropriations of the Senate; and

8 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the
9 Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,
10 the Armed Services Committee, and the Com-
11 mittee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
12 resentatives.

13 (2) NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL.—The term
14 “national security council” means, with respect to a
15 specified country, an intergovernmental body under
16 the jurisdiction of the freely elected government of
17 the specified country that acts as the primary co-
18 ordinating entity for security cooperation, disaster
19 response, and the activities described in section 3(e).

20 (3) SPECIFIED COUNTRY.—The term “specified
21 country” means—

22 (A) the Federated States of Micronesia;

23 (B) the Republic of the Marshall Islands;

24 and

25 (C) the Republic of Palau.

1 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCILS OF SPECIFIED**
2 **COUNTRIES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in con-
4 sultation with other relevant Federal departments and
5 agencies, as appropriate, may consult and engage with
6 each specified country to advise and provide assistance to
7 a national security council (including by developing a na-
8 tional security council, if appropriate), or to identify a
9 similar coordinating body for national security matters,
10 comprised of citizens of the specified country—

11 (1) that enables the specified country—

12 (A) to better coordinate with the United
13 States Government, including the Armed
14 Forces, as appropriate;

15 (B) to increase cohesion on activities, in-
16 cluding emergency humanitarian response, law
17 enforcement, and maritime security activities;
18 and

19 (C) to provide trained professionals to
20 serve as members of the committees of the
21 specified country established under the applica-
22 ble Compact of Free Association; and

23 (2) for the purpose of enhancing resilience ca-
24 pabilities and protecting the people, infrastructure,
25 and territory of the specified country from malign
26 actions.

1 (b) COMPOSITION.—The Secretary of State, respect-
2 ing the unique needs of each specified country, may seek
3 to ensure that the national security council, or other iden-
4 tified coordinating body, of the specified country is com-
5 posed of sufficient staff and members to enable the activi-
6 ties described in subsection (e).

7 (c) STANDARDS FOR EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES.—
8 The Secretary of State may work with the national secu-
9 rity council, or other identified coordinating body, of each
10 specified country to ensure that—

11 (1) the equipment and services used by the na-
12 tional security council or other identified coordi-
13 nating body are compliant with security standards so
14 as to minimize the risk of cyberattacks or espionage;

15 (2) the national security council or other identi-
16 fied coordinating body takes all reasonable efforts
17 not to procure or use systems, equipment, or soft-
18 ware that originates from any entity identified under
19 section 1260H of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry
20 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year
21 (Public Law 116–283; 10 U.S.C. 113 note); and

22 (3) to the extent practicable, the equipment and
23 services used by the national security council or
24 other identified coordinating body are interoperable
25 with the equipment and services used by the national

1 security councils, or other identified coordinating
2 bodies, of the other specified countries.

3 (d) REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
6 nually thereafter for 2 years, the Secretary of State
7 shall submit to the appropriate committees of Con-
8 gress a report that includes—

9 (A) an assessment as to whether a national
10 security council or a similar formal coordinating
11 body is helping or would help achieve the objec-
12 tives described in subsection (a) at acceptable
13 financial and opportunity cost;

14 (B) a description of all actions taken by
15 the United States Government to assist in the
16 identification or maintenance of a national se-
17 curity council, or other identified coordinating
18 body, in each specified country;

19 (C) with respect to each specified country,
20 an assessment as to whether—

21 (i) the specified country has appro-
22 priately staffed its national security council
23 or other identified coordinating body; and

24 (ii) the extent to which the national
25 security council, or other identified coordi-

1 nating body, of the specified country is ca-
2 pable of carrying out the activities de-
3 scribed in subsection (e);

4 (D) an assessment of—

5 (i) any challenge to cooperation and
6 coordination with the national security
7 council, or other identified coordinating
8 body, of any specified country;

9 (ii) current efforts by the Secretary of
10 State to coordinate with the specified coun-
11 tries on the activities described in sub-
12 section (e); and

13 (iii) existing governmental entities
14 within each specified country that are ca-
15 pable of supporting such activities;

16 (E) a description of any challenge with re-
17 spect to—

18 (i) the implementation of the national
19 security council, or other identified coordi-
20 nating body, of any specified country; and

21 (ii) the implementation of subsections
22 (a) through (c);

23 (F) an assessment of any attempt or cam-
24 paign by a malign actor to influence the polit-
25 ical, security, or economic policy of a specified

1 country, a member of a national security coun-
2 cil or other identified coordinating body, or an
3 immediate family member of such a member;
4 and

5 (G) any other matter the Secretary of
6 State considers relevant.

7 (2) FORM.—Each report required by paragraph
8 (1) may be submitted in unclassified form and may
9 include a classified annex.

10 (e) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—The activities de-
11 scribed in this subsection are the following homeland secu-
12 rity activities:

13 (1) Coordination of—

14 (A) the prosecution and investigation of
15 transnational criminal enterprises;

16 (B) responses to national emergencies,
17 such as natural disasters;

18 (C) counterintelligence and counter- coer-
19 sion responses to foreign threats; and

20 (D) efforts to combat illegal, unreported,
21 or unregulated fishing.

22 (2) Coordination with United States Govern-
23 ment officials on humanitarian response, military ex-
24 ercises, law enforcement, and other issues of security
25 concern.

- 1 (3) Identification and development of an exist-
- 2 ing governmental entity to support homeland defense
- 3 and civil support activities.

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