

Black Sea Security Act of 2023

[S. 804 – Sens. Jeanne Shaheen \(D-NH\) and Sen. Mitt Romney \(R-UT\)](#)

[H.R. 1680 – Rep. Mike Turner \(R-OH\) and Rep. Bill Keating \(D-MA\)](#)

- The Black Sea region is “an active site for geostrategic competition among the United States, Russia, and China” and “is becoming a gravitational center for Europe’s future.”¹ The region links Europe to the Middle East and beyond and has economic importance as a transportation nexus for many goods, including grain exports from Ukraine and energy products from the Caspian Sea.
- Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has far-reaching impacts for the Black Sea region. U.S. and NATO allies in the region remain on the front lines of alliance deterrence efforts, an evolving situation that requires high priority and attention, especially “amidst Moscow’s revanchist ambitions”² and “China...increasing its foothold.”³
- Congress should raise the level of U.S. engagement with its Black Sea allies to play a more proactive role in the region by formally establishing a U.S. strategy that bolsters its economic-military footprint, security, and trade in the region.
- *The Black Sea Security Act* ([H.R. 1680/S. 804](#)), a bipartisan bill would direct an interagency strategy to (1) increase coordination with NATO and the European Union, (2) deepen economic ties, and (3) strengthen the security and democratic resilience of partners in the Black Sea region in accordance with U.S. values and interests.
- A modified version was included in the Senate’s version of the NDAA and is now positioned to be enacted, should it be included in the final, conferenced version of the legislation. Its enactment is of critical importance to U.S. national security interests and the stability of the Black Sea region.
- On October 19, Sens. Jeanne Shaheen and Pete Ricketts (R-NE) hosted a roundtable conversation with Ambassadors from countries in the Black Sea region—including the Ambassadors of Ukraine, Romania, Georgia, Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Moldova—the Ambassadors unanimously expressed full support for Senator Shaheen’s proposal to include language Black Sea Security Act in the FY 24 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)⁴. On October 25, the Senators also hosted Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Ambassador James O’Brien at a hearing assessing the U.S. Department of State Strategy for Security in the Black Sea Region.⁵

ASK: Congress needs to urge the Administration and NATO to prioritize an actionable strategy for long-term engagement with regional allies and bolster its economic–military footprint in the Black Sea region. Therefore, we ask that your Senator/Representative:

- Co-sponsor the *Black Sea Security Act* to formalize a strategy towards the region and advocate for increased advocacy between U.S., NATO, and the EU; and
- Weigh in with the House Armed Services Committee/Senate Armed Services Committee to urge them to maintain inclusion of [sec. 6231 of the Senate NDAA](#) (the Black Sea Security Act) in the FY24 NDAA.

¹ Daniel Kochis and Brent Sadler, “Why a New Black Sea Strategy Is in the U.S. Interest,” Report, Heritage Foundation, June 28, 2023, <https://www.heritage.org/europe/report/why-new-black-sea-strategy-the-us-interest>.

² Ian Brzezinski, *Black Sea Security: Reviving U.S. Policy Toward the Region*, testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation, October 27, 2021, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/black-sea-security-reviving-us-policy-toward-the-region102721>.

³ *Ibid*, testimony of Alina Polyakova

⁴ Office of Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, “Shaheen and Ricketts Host a Bipartisan Roundtable Discussion on Black Sea Security with Regional Ambassadors,” press release, October 19, 2023, <https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/shaheen-and-ricketts-host-a-bipartisan-roundtable-discussion-on-black-sea-security-with-regional-ambassadors>.

⁵ *Assessing the Department of State’s Strategy for Security in the Black Sea*, hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Cooperation, October 25, 2023, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-the-department-of-states-strategy-for-security-in-the-black-sea-region>.

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