Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 1632, with an Amendment
(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1632

To require a strategy for engagement with Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2019

Mrs. Wagner (for herself, Mr. Castro of Texas, and Mr. Yoho) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To require a strategy for engagement with Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “Southeast Asia Strategy Act”.

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

5 Congress finds the following:
1 (1) Southeast Asia is the fulcrum of the Indo-
Pacific region, providing both a geographic and mar-
itime link between East and South Asia.

2 (2) The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
(ASEAN), a regional intergovernmental organiza-
tion, remains central to the Indo-Pacific region’s in-
stitutional architecture and to United States foreign
policy toward the region.

3 (3) The United States has reaffirmed that the
security and sovereignty of its Southeast Asian allies
and partners, including a strong, independent
ASEAN, remain vital to the security, prosperity, and
stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

4 (4) The United States has committed to con-
tinuing to deepen longstanding alliances and part-
nerships with a range of Southeast Asian nations,
including by promoting our shared values, democ-
raey, human rights, and civil society.

5 (5) Since the end of the Second World War,
United States investments in strengthening alliances
and partnerships with Southeast Asian nations have
yielded tremendous returns for United States inter-
estts, as working with and through these alliances
and partnerships have increased the region’s capac-
ity and capability to address common challenges.
(6) ASEAN member states are critical United States security partners in preventing violent extremism and protecting the freedom and openness of the maritime domain and in preventing the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction.

(7) ASEAN member states have contributed significantly to regional disaster monitoring and management and emergency response through initiatives such as the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, an inter-governmental organization that facilitates coordination and cooperation among ASEAN member states and international organizations in times of emergency.

(8) According to the 2018 ASEAN Business Outlook Survey, ASEAN member states are vital to the prosperity of the United States economy and exports to ASEAN economies support more than 500,000 jobs in the United States.

(9) The United States and ASEAN have recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of their ties and established a new strategic partnership that will enhance cooperation across the economic, political-security, and people-to-people pillars of the relationship.
SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) deepen cooperation with ASEAN and ASEAN member states in the interest of promoting peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region;

(2) affirm the importance of ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the evolving institutional architecture of the Indo-Pacific region; and

(3) establish and communicate a comprehensive strategy toward the Indo-Pacific region that articulates—

(A) the role and importance of Southeast Asia to the United States;

(B) the value of the United States-ASEAN relationship;

(C) the mutual interests of all parties;

(D) the concrete and material benefits all nations derive from strong United States engagement and leadership in Southeast Asia; and

(E) efforts to forge and maintain ASEAN consensus, especially on key issues of political and security concern to the region, such as the South China Sea.
SEC. 4. STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ASEAN.

(a) In General.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies as appropriate, shall develop and submit to the appropriate congressional committees a comprehensive strategy for engagement with Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

(b) Matters To Be Included.—The strategy required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A statement of enduring United States interests in Southeast Asia and a description of efforts to bolster the effectiveness of ASEAN.

(2) A description of efforts to—

(A) deepen and expand Southeast Asian alliances, partnerships, and multilateral engagements, including efforts to expand broad based and inclusive economic growth, security ties, security cooperation and interoperability, economic connectivity, and expand opportunities for ASEAN to work with other like-minded partners in the region; and

(B) encourage like-minded partners outside of the Indo-Pacific region to engage with ASEAN.
(3) A summary of initiatives across the whole of the United States Government to strengthen the United States partnership with Southeast Asian nations and ASEAN, including to promote broad based and inclusive economic growth, trade, investment, energy and efforts to combat climate change, public-private partnerships, physical and digital infrastructure development, education, disaster management, public health and economic and political diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

(4) A summary of initiatives across the whole of the United States Government to enhance the capacity of Southeast Asian nations with respect to enforcing international law and multilateral sanctions, and initiatives to cooperate with ASEAN as an institution in these areas.

(5) A summary of initiatives across the whole of the United States Government to promote human rights and democracy, to strengthen the rule of law, civil society, and transparent governance, and to protect the integrity of elections from outside influence.

(6) A summary of initiatives to promote security cooperation and security assistance within Southeast Asian nations, including—
(A) maritime security and maritime domain awareness initiatives for protecting the maritime commons and supporting international law and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea; and

(B) efforts to combat terrorism, human trafficking, piracy, and illegal fishing, and promote more open, reliable routes for sea lines of communication.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.