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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To require the Secretary of State to develop a strategy for countering the expansion of Al Qaeda in Mali, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PANETTA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Secretary of State to develop a strategy for countering the expansion of Al Qaeda in Mali, and for other purposes.

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 “Mali Security Partner-
5 ship and Counterterrorism Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Al-Qaeda-linked group Jama'at Nusrat
2 al-Islam wal-Muslimeen (JNIM) has significantly ex-
3 panded its reach across central Mali and the broader
4 Sahel, conducting large-scale attacks against secu-
5 rity forces and establishing influence in contested re-
6 gions.

7 (2) Militant groups including JNIM and the Is-
8 lamic State Sahel Province have consolidated terri-
9 torial control across Mali, escalating violence, desta-
10 bilizing state authority, and extending operations
11 into littoral West African states.

12 (3) JNIM's campaign in Mali has included eco-
13 nomic disruption tactics that have paralyzed key
14 trade and transport routes, undermined government
15 authority, and contributed to national shortages and
16 economic distress.

17 (4) The withdrawal of traditional international
18 counterterrorism forces, coupled with weakened re-
19 gional counterterrorism cooperation, has created a
20 security vacuum that extremist networks are exploit-
21 ing to expand and entrench themselves.

22 (5) The Sahel region has become a global epi-
23 center of terrorism-related violence, with extremist
24 activity in that region accounting for a dispropor-
25 tionate share of worldwide terrorist attacks and

1 deaths and with expanded militant networks posing
2 spillover risks to neighboring coastal countries.

3 **SEC. 3. REPORT ON AL-QAEDA'S EXPANSION AND ILLEGAL**
4 **FINANCING IN MALI.**

5 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
6 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in
7 coordination with the heads of other appropriate Federal
8 departments and agencies, shall submit to the Committee
9 on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and
10 the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a re-
11 port on the scope and trajectory of al-Qaeda's presence
12 and influence in Mali, and the role of gold trafficking, in-
13 formal taxation, and illicit trade networks in Mali in fi-
14 nancing terrorist and violent extremist organizations.
15 Such report shall also include—

16 (1) an evaluation of al-Qaeda's territorial influ-
17 ence, including areas of de facto control, operational
18 freedom, or governance activities;

19 (2) an analysis of cross-border operations and
20 coordination with extremist elements in Burkina
21 Faso and Niger, including logistics, command-and-
22 control linkages, and mobility corridors;

23 (3) an assessment of recruitment pipelines, in-
24 cluding the exploitation of local grievances, ethnic
25 tensions, economic vulnerabilities, and displacement;

1 (4) an evaluation of financing mechanisms, in-
2 cluding taxation, extortion, illicit trade, and external
3 support networks;

4 (5) an analysis of trends indicating whether al-
5 Qaeda is consolidating, expanding, or fragmenting
6 its presence in Mali;

7 (6) an assessment of how illegal gold produc-
8 tion, transit, and export networks are exploited by
9 terrorist organizations, including al-Qaeda-affiliated
10 groups, for revenue generation;

11 (7) an analysis of the use of coercive taxation,
12 protection payments, or control of mining sites by
13 such organizations;

14 (8) an identification of key transit routes,
15 facilitators, and financial intermediaries involved in
16 the illegal gold trade linked to extremist financing;

17 (9) an assessment of existing United States and
18 international efforts to disrupt illegal mineral-based
19 financing and recommendations for strengthening
20 such efforts; and

21 (10) an assessment of current sanctions against
22 entities in Mali, including the effects of such sanc-
23 tions on the capacity of the Government of Mali to
24 combat terrorist networks.

1 (b) DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY.—In addition to the mat-
2 ters described in subsection (a), the report required under
3 that subsection shall also include a United States diplo-
4 matic strategy for countering al-Qaeda influence in Mali,
5 including—

6 (1) proposed bilateral and multilateral diplo-
7 matic initiatives to constrain al-Qaeda’s freedom of
8 movement and influence;

9 (2) engagement with regional partners and
10 international organizations to improve cross-border
11 coordination and information sharing;

12 (3) efforts to address governance, economic,
13 and security conditions that facilitate extremist re-
14 cruitment and financing; and

15 (4) metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of
16 United States diplomatic engagement in countering
17 al-Qaeda’s expansion.