

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Recognizing the United States-Philippines alliance on the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations, the 75th anniversary of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines, and the 10th anniversary of the landmark arbitral award upholding Manila's sovereignty against escalating aggression and lawfare by the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. RICKETTS (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the United States-Philippines alliance on the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations, the 75th anniversary of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines, and the 10th anniversary of the landmark arbitral award upholding Manila's sovereignty against escalating aggression and lawfare by the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea.

Whereas the United States and the Philippines have maintained diplomatic relations for 80 years, which was founded on the basis of deeply interconnected strategic and economic interests and close bonds between the people of both countries;

Whereas there are more than 4,000,000 Filipino-Americans living in the United States, and approximately 300,000 United States citizens permanently residing in the Philippines, including a significant population of retired United States military veterans;

Whereas the United States-Philippines partnership was forged in blood, when more than 20,000 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Filipinos were killed in the Philippines campaigns during World War II;

Whereas, following the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Philippines between 1941 and 1945, the former United States commonwealth secured its official independence on July 4, 1946;

Whereas the United States and the Philippines signed an Agreement Concerning Military Bases in Manila on March 14, 1947;

Whereas, on August 30, 1951, the United States and the Philippines signed the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines (referred to in this resolution as the “Mutual Defense Treaty”), which is the United States’s longest-standing mutual defense treaty in the Indo-Pacific region;

Whereas the Mutual Defense Treaty clarifies the United States-Philippine collective intent—

- (1) to resolve international disputes peacefully;
- (2) to undertake separate and joint development of the capacity to resist attack; and
- (3) to consult with each another whenever the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of the

United States or the Philippines is under threat of external armed attack in the Pacific;

Whereas the Mutual Defense Treaty is the foundation of our security alliance and all other enabling defense agreements between the United States and the Philippines, including the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, done at Manila April 28, 2014;

Whereas the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement allows for a strengthened United States military presence in the Philippines—

(1) to increase bilateral cooperation and interoperability; and

(2) to provide training to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, with increased rotation of United States military personnel and assistance devoted to strengthening the territorial defense and humanitarian and maritime operations of the Philippines;

Whereas, in February 2023, the United States and the Philippines committed to designating 4 additional agreed locations under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, increasing the total number of such locations from 5 to 9;

Whereas these agreed locations—

(1) have strategic value for the United States and the Philippines;

(2) increase confidence in the bilateral alliance; and

(3) provide real opportunities for operational cooperation to advance shared security priorities;

Whereas the Mutual Defense Treaty serves as a deterrent against the increasing territorial aggression by the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea;

Whereas, in 2009, the People’s Republic of China began unlawfully extending its territorial and sovereignty claims in the South China Sea under its “nine-dash line” construct, which violates the territorial rights and internationally recognized exclusive economic zones of the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam;

Whereas, in June 2012, the People’s Republic of China seized de facto control of Scarborough Shoal;

Whereas, since 2014, the People’s Republic of China has substantially expanded its ability to monitor and project power throughout the South China Sea via the construction of militarized artificial islands;

Whereas, on September 25, 2015, President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping stated during a White House press conference that “China does not intend to pursue militarization” of the Spratly Islands and China’s outposts would not “target or impact any country”;

Whereas, on July 12, 2016, the arbitral tribunal constituted under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea unanimously decided to invalidate the People’s Republic of China’s claim to nearly 90 percent of the South China Sea, including areas determined by the tribunal to be part of the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone and continental shelf;

Whereas, despite the decision being final and legally binding, the People’s Republic of China, which refused to participate in the arbitration, has continued to reject and further violate the decision;

Whereas the People’s Republic of China has employed a variety of assertive and aggressive tactics against the Philippines, including through research vessels, state-sub-

sidized People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia swarming fleets, the China Coast Guard, and the People's Liberation Army Navy vessels, to coerce and enforce its arbitrary and unlawful territorial claims in the South China Sea, such as by ramming, shadowing, blocking, encircling, firing water cannons at, and using military-grade lasers against Philippine civilian ships and military vessels;

Whereas the People's Republic of China has repeatedly denied the Philippines from lawfully delivering humanitarian supplies to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines stationed at the BRP Sierra Madre at Second Thomas Shoal;

Whereas, in April 2024, the United States, Japan, and the Philippines launched the Luzon Economic Corridor to catalyze mutual economic growth, create jobs, strengthen connectivity, and improve transport and logistics, energy, and digital infrastructure along the corridor connecting Subic Bay, Clark, Manila, and Batangas;

Whereas, on June 17, 2024, coast guard sailors from the People's Republic of China brandished knives and other weapons in a clash with Philippine naval vessels attempting to resupply marines on Second Thomas Shoal, resulting in a severe injury to a member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines;

Whereas, in March 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, while visiting the Philippines during his first trip to an Indo-Pacific partner, committed—

- (1) to deploy additional advanced military capabilities to the Philippines;
- (2) to conduct bilateral training between both nations for high-end operations;

(3) to prioritize bilateral defense industrial cooperation; and

(4) to launch a bilateral cyber campaign;

Whereas, in April 2025, the Chinese Coast Guard temporarily deployed on Sandy Cay, an unoccupied reef located 2 miles from Manila's largest outpost in the South China Sea, and placed a Chinese flag, indicating an intention to annex, expand, and possibly militarize the feature;

Whereas, in May 2025, the United States and the Philippines conducted Exercise Balikatan 2025, which included participation by more than 14,000 American, Filipino, Australian, and Japanese service members and the first deployment of the Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS);

Whereas, on August 11, 2025, a China Coast Guard vessel collided with another People's Republic of China vessel while aggressively swarming a Philippine Coast Guard vessel that was conducting a humanitarian mission within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone;

Whereas, in October 2025, China Coast Guard vessels intercepted a Philippine maritime patrol boat near Thitu Island, a major civilian-inhabited feature held by Manila;

Whereas, in December 2025, China Coast Guard ships fired water cannons at Filipino fishermen near the disputed Sabina Shoal, injuring 3 people and causing significant damage to 2 fishing vessels;

Whereas, in March 2026, a People's Liberation Army Navy vessel locked fire control radar on a Philippine Navy vessel conducting a sovereignty patrol near Sabina Shoal;

Whereas, in April 2026, the Philippine Coast Guard reported that Chinese military forces fired tactical illumination

flares directly into the flight paths of passing Philippine maritime surveillance aircraft, which severely threatened flight safety;

Whereas, in April 2026, China deployed a massive 352-meter floating barrier across the mouth of Scarborough Shoal's lagoon, completely severing access for Filipino fishermen;

Whereas, in April 2026, the United States and the Philippines announced plans to establish a 4,000-acre Economic Security Zone within the Luzon Economic Corridor under the Pax Silica initiative;

Whereas, in May 2026, the Luzon Economic Corridor steering committee formally expanded to include 8 additional global partners, namely Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, South Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, positioning the corridor as a multi-billion-dollar multilateral alternative to the People's Republic of China's predatory infrastructure deals;

Whereas, in May 2026, the United States and the Philippines hosted the largest Exercise Balikatan, which included notable developments, such as—

- (1) participation of 17,000 troops, including troops from Japan, Australia, Canada, France, and New Zealand;

- (2) the deployment of Japanese combat troops on Philippines soil;

- (3) the first deployment of Japan's Type-88 surface-to-ship missile outside of Japan; and

- (4) the real-time sharing of command-and-control data among allies to jointly defend against maritime aggression;

Whereas, in May 2026, a United States Coast Guard vessel joined Philippine Navy and Coast Guard vessels for a joint patrol sailing between 35 and 40 nautical miles from the contested Scarborough Shoal;

Whereas, in May 2026, commercial satellite imagery revealed that the People's Republic of China placed a possible structure at Scarborough Shoal;

Whereas July 4, 2026 marks the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Philippines;

Whereas July 12, 2026 marks the 10th anniversary of an international arbitral tribunal's ruling overwhelmingly in favor of the Philippines in its dispute with the People's Republic of China regarding the South China Sea; and

Whereas August 30, 2026 marks the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Philippines: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) celebrates the 80th anniversary of the es-
3 tablishment of formal diplomatic relations between
4 the United States and the Philippines;

5 (2) celebrates the 75th anniversary of the sign-
6 ing of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the
7 United States of America and the Philippines and
8 the longstanding alliance between our 2 nations;

9 (3) condemns the People's Republic of China's
10 refusal to accept the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral

1 Ruling that rejects its illegal and expansive terri-
2 torial claims in the South China Sea;

3 (4) appreciates the trust of the Filipino people
4 in our bilateral alliance and their support for in-
5 creased defense cooperation and United States mili-
6 tary presence in the Philippines;

7 (5) supports the United States-Philippines alli-
8 ance's expanding strategic focus on economic and
9 supply chain security through the Luzon Economic
10 Corridor, Pax Silica, and other measures to
11 strengthen our partnership on critical minerals, ad-
12 vanced manufacturing, emerging technologies, en-
13 ergy, transport, and logistics;

14 (6) acknowledges the determination of the peo-
15 ple and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to re-
16 sist coercion by the People's Republic of China;

17 (7) condemns the People's Republic of China's
18 unprovoked aggression and political lawfare in the
19 South China Sea to enforce its unlawful territorial
20 and sovereignty claims;

21 (8) rejects the People's Republic of China's co-
22 ercive and destabilizing plans to establish a so-called
23 "national nature reserve" at Scarborough Reef;

24 (9) reaffirms that Article IV of the Mutual De-
25 fense Treaty extends to armed attacks on the Armed

1 Forces, public vessels, or aircraft of the Philippines,
2 including the Philippine Coast Guard, anywhere in
3 the South China Sea;

4 (10) considers aggression by the People's Re-
5 public of China in the Philippines' internationally
6 recognized exclusive economic zone to be a direct as-
7 sault on its sovereignty and territorial integrity;

8 (11) urges the President to continue to take ap-
9 propriate and necessary actions in response to
10 escalatory behavior of the People's Republic of
11 China in order to restore deterrence and to help the
12 Philippines defend itself;

13 (12) supports the unwavering commitment of
14 the United States to deepening security cooperation
15 with the Philippines, including advancing Philippine
16 defense modernization and enhancing interoper-
17 ability through military exercises, training, joint pa-
18 trols, and increased information sharing;

19 (13) supports other nations growing their polit-
20 ical and security partnerships with the Philippines;

21 (14) commits to advance cooperation among the
22 United States, the Philippines, Japan, Australia,
23 South Korea, and other partners; and

24 (15) reaffirms the commitment of the United
25 States to the right to freedom of navigation and

1 overflight, respecting maritime rights under inter-
2 national law, and ensuring a free and open Indo-Pa-
3 cific.