Republic of the Philippines

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1675


RESOLUTION

URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY TO CONDEMN AND CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE PRESENCE OF MORE THAN 200 CHINESE VESSELS IN JULIAN FELIPE REEF

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2021 around 220 Chinese vessels in line formation were spotted at the Julian Felipe (Whitsun) Reef in the West Philippine Sea (WPS);

WHEREAS, the Philippine government has expressed concern on the matter as stated by the National Task Force - West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS) due to the possible overfishing and destruction of the marine environment, as well as risks to safety of navigation;

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2021, the Chinese Embassy released a statement claiming the Chinese fishing vessels took shelter near the Julian Felipe Reef due to rough sea conditions. It also denied the involvement of Chinese Maritime Militias. Moreover, it added that any speculation only causes unnecessary irritation;

WHEREAS, to date the Chinese government already established seven (7) military bases on the reefs of the Philippines: in Mischief Reef, Johnson South, Cuarteron, Fiery Cross, Subi Reef, McKennan Reef, and Gaven Reef. The Julian Felipe Reef may not be far from being the next;

WHEREAS, Julian Felipe Reef is a large boomerang – shaped shallow coral reef northeast of Pagkakaisa Banks and Reefs, located at approximately 175 nautical miles west of Bataraza, Palawan;

WHEREAS, the reef is within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, over which the Philippines have “exclusive right to use resources, including fish, oil and natural gas,” according to the NTF-WPS;

1 http://ph.china-embassy.org/eng/sgdt/t1863034.htm
WHEREAS, even though the Philippines adheres to the policy of amity with all nations, as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, the Philippine Government has a prime duty to serve and protect the people. Moreover, the State puts paramount consideration to national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination when establishing relationships with other countries;

WHEREAS, Section 2, Article XII of the 1987 Constitution mandates that “the State shall protect the nation’s marine wealth in its archipelagic waters, territorial sea, and exclusive economic zone, and reserve its use and enjoyment exclusively to Filipino citizens;”

WHEREAS, despite the historical victory of the Philippines over its claims in the South China Sea following the ruling of the UN’s International Tribunal on the Laws of the Sea dated July 12, 2016, the Duterte administration took a passive stance over the matter unlike other countries with claims in the South China Sea. To date, the Philippine government, especially the Armed Forces of the Philippines, has yet to effectively enforce the arbitration award and protect the country’s national patrimony and territorial integrity against China’s encroachment in the West Philippine Sea;

WHEREAS, the failure of the Duterte administration to protect the country’s territorial integrity resulted to the loss of livelihood of many Filipino fisherfolk. With the continuing harassment by the China Coast Guard and the Chinese deployment of maritime militias, Filipinos were deprived of the natural resources in its own territory;

WHEREAS, considering the current situation where China is claiming virtually the whole South China Sea, the position and deployment of the Chinese vessels may lead to another level of disrespect to Philippine sovereignty over the West Philippine Sea, as well as heightened Chinese aggression. It is feared that China will intensify the harassment and human rights violations against the Filipino people and further deprive them of their rights over the natural resources in the Philippine territory;

WHEREAS, part of the duty of Congress is to ensure that our territorial integrity is intact, local and international laws be honored and recognized, and more importantly, the safety and economic rights of the people are protected and upheld. But Congress is also joined by all patriotic Filipinos in the duty to defend our territories from foreign dominance and intrusion.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives, through the Committee on National Defense and Security, to condemn and conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, the presence of more than 200 Chinese vessels in the vicinity of the Julian Felipe Reef.
Adopted,

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
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REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women’s Party

REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist