

H. Res. 837

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

November 20, 2024.

Whereas the United States established diplomatic relations with the Philippines on July 4, 1946, and the two countries have since enjoyed expanded and positive relations;

Whereas there are over 4,000,000 United States citizens of Philippine ancestry in the United States;

Whereas the United States and the Philippines have a strong and mutually beneficial trade relationship, with more than \$18,900,000,000 in goods and services traded during 2020;

Whereas the People's Republic of China continues to use its Coast Guard and its Merchant Marine to violate the Philippines sovereignty, including in the Scarborough Shoal,

Whereas Chinese Communist Party propaganda now assert claims based on a so-called "ten-dash line", after a United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea arbitral tribunal ruled that China's nine-dashed line had "no legal basis";

Whereas in 1994, the People's Republic of China unlawfully seized Mischief Reef and have since constructed 20 artificial islands that extends the operational capabilities of the People's Liberation Army with the aim of expanding

its presence and reinforcing their illegitimate claims to the South China Sea;

Whereas the People’s Republic of China is asserting its sweeping claims over the South China Sea by disrupting the regular resupply of the BRP Sierra Madre, a Philippine Navy transport ship, based in the Second Thomas Shoal, by shooting water cannons at Philippine Coast Guard vessels and using military-grade lasers to blind its crew;

Whereas, on April 3, 2023, the Biden administration announced plans today to expand the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Arrangement to include four new sites to strengthen interoperability and allow the United States and the Philippines to better address shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific region;

Whereas, on August 5, 2023, the United States Department of State reaffirmed that “an armed attack on Philippine public vessels, aircraft, and armed forces—including those of its Coast Guard in the South China Sea—would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments under Article IV of the 1951 U.S. Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty”;

Whereas, on October 22, 2023, the Chinese Coast Guard rammed a Philippines Coast Guard cutter escorting supplies to the Second Thomas Shoal within the Philippines exclusive economic zone;

Whereas, on April 11, 2024, the leaders of Japan, the Philippines, and the United States held a trilateral summit in Washington, D.C., to expand trilateral cooperation and bolster a free and open Indo-Pacific and an international order based on international law; and

Whereas, on June 17, 2024, PRC vessels tried to deny the Philippines from lawfully delivering humanitarian supplies to service members stationed at the BRP Sierra Madre through the dangerous use of water cannons, ramming, blocking maneuvers, and towing which damaged Philippine vessels and injured Philippine service members: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms the United States unwavering commitment to invoke its Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines if an armed attack against the Philippines assets, including those of the Philippine Coast Guard, is committed in the South China Sea;

(2) calls on the United States and Philippines to conduct more joint patrols in the South China Sea, including with other like-minded partners, to underscore the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight;

(3) firmly objects to the People’s Republic of China’s false sovereignty claims to the South China Sea;

(4) strongly condemns and calls on the People’s Republic of China to cease its aggressive and dangerous actions against Philippine vessels in the South China Sea;

(5) welcomes swift implementation of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement to ensure we adhere to our commitments to the Philippine people, and to foster a free and open Indo-Pacific for all;

(6) emphasizes that respecting the shared values of democratic institutions, human rights, and the rule of law, especially with regard to the rights of trade unionists, journalists, human rights defenders, critics of the Government, faith and religious leaders, and civil society activists, will strengthen the alliance between the United States and the Philippines; and

(7) reaffirms the United States unwavering commitment to invoke its Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines, in accordance with constitutional processes, if an armed attack against the Philippines assets, including those of the Philippine Coast Guard, is committed in the South China Sea.

Attest:

Clerk.