

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 843

Reaffirming the United States-Philippines alliance and condemning the gray zone campaign of the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea against the Philippines, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 2023

Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. BERA, Mr. WALTZ, and Mr. VARGAS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the United States-Philippines alliance and condemning the gray zone campaign of the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea against the Philippines, and for other purposes.

Whereas the United States and the Philippines have a long-standing alliance, characterized by a robust and multifaceted relationship between the 2 societies, including shared values, familial and generational ties, mutual defense commitments, and shared economic interests that have enriched the lives of the people of both the United States and the Philippines;

Whereas, in 1946, the Philippines became an independent republic and established diplomatic relations with the United States;

Whereas, in 1951, the United States and the Philippines signed a Mutual Defense Treaty, pledging mutual support in case of an armed attack;

Whereas, during World War II, the United States and the Philippines fought side-by-side in the defense of a free and open Indo-Pacific;

Whereas, during World War II, Philippine resistance units made tremendous sacrifices and were critical to victory in the Pacific and the liberation of the Philippines;

Whereas the Philippines and the Republic of China participated in the Allied war effort, which resulted in victory including the successful liberation of China;

Whereas the People's Republic of China (PRC) now seeks to unlawfully extend its territorial and sovereignty claims, including against the Philippines;

Whereas, under its "nine-dash line" construct, the PRC makes erroneous claims to territorial rights in the exclusive economic zones of Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam;

Whereas, in 2013, the Philippines pursued arbitration under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) against the PRC;

Whereas, in 2016, the tribunal constituted under UNCLOS to hear the matter ruled in favor of the Philippines, finding that the nine-dash line has no standing under international law when it stated: "On the merits, the Tribunal concluded that the Convention comprehensively allocates rights to maritime areas and that protections for pre-existing rights to resources were considered, but not adopted in the Convention. Accordingly, the Tribunal concluded that, to the extent China had historic rights to re-

sources in the waters of the South China Sea, such rights were extinguished to the extent they were incompatible with the exclusive economic zones provided for in the Convention.”;

Whereas, despite being a signatory to UNCLOS, the PRC refused to participate in the arbitration and rejected its results;

Whereas Article 4 of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Philippines done in duplicate at Washington on August 30, 1951, states that “Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes.”;

Whereas, on July 13, 2020, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued a statement clarifying United States policy by stating, in part: “Beijing’s claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful, as is its campaign of bullying to control them . . . Beijing has offered no coherent legal basis for its ‘Nine-Dashed Line’ claim in the South China Sea since formally announcing it in 2009.”;

Whereas, on March 1, 2019, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated that “As the South China Sea is part of the Pacific, any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft or public vessels in the South China Sea will trigger mutual defense obligations under Article 4 of our mutual defense treaty.”;

Whereas, on April 11, 2023, at a joint press conference with the United States Secretary of Defense, the Philippine

Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and the Philippine Senior Undersecretary and Officer in Charge of the Department of National Defense, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken reaffirmed “the United States’ unwavering commitment to standing with the Philippines against any intimidation or coercion, including in the South China Sea, and to preserving a region that’s governed by international law where goods and ideas and people can move freely.”;

Whereas the PRC has employed a variety of gray zone tactics to enforce its erroneous territorial claims in the South China Sea;

Whereas, on February 13, 2023, a PRC vessel used a laser against a Philippine vessel, temporarily blinding some of its crew;

Whereas, in August 2023, a China Coast Guard vessel used a water cannon to prevent Philippine vessels from resupplying Philippine forces on Second Thomas Shoal;

Whereas, on October 22, 2023, a China Coast Guard vessel and an associated vessel rammed 2 Philippine resupply and Coast Guard ships near Second Thomas Shoal; and

Whereas, on October 25, 2023, during a joint press conference with the Prime Minister of Australia, President Joseph R. Biden reiterated that “the United States’ defense commitment to the Philippines is ironclad” and that “any attack on the Filipino aircraft, vessels, or armed forces will invoke our Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines.”: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1 (1) celebrates the longstanding alliance and mu-  
2 tually beneficial partnership between the United  
3 States and the Philippines;

4 (2) reaffirms its unwavering support for the  
5 Philippines in the face of unprovoked aggression;

6 (3) affirms that the Mutual Defense Treaty ap-  
7 plies to armed attacks on Philippine Armed Forces,  
8 public vessels, or aircraft in the Pacific, including in  
9 the South China Sea;

10 (4) calls on the People's Republic of China to  
11 stop advancing its unlawful maritime territorial and  
12 sovereignty claims in the South China Sea;

13 (5) condemns the People's Republic of China's  
14 use of gray zone tactics in the South China Sea to  
15 enforce its unlawful territorial and sovereignty  
16 claims;

17 (6) condemns the People's Republic of China's  
18 use of lasing, water cannons, and ramming against  
19 Philippine vessels, particularly the incidents in 2023;  
20 and

21 (7) calls for an end to aggressive behavior by  
22 People's Republic of China vessels, including its  
23 Coast Guard and maritime militia vessels, in areas  
24 where the 2016 United Nations Convention on the

- 1 Law of the Sea tribunal stated that the People's Re-
- 2 public of China does not have sovereign rights.

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