

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. RES. 834

Reaffirming the Republic of the Philippines' claim over Second Thomas Shoal and supporting the Filipino people in their efforts to combat aggression by the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. HAGERTY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the Republic of the Philippines' claim over Second Thomas Shoal and supporting the Filipino people in their efforts to combat aggression by the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea.

Whereas Second Thomas Shoal (also known as "Ayungin Shoal") is located within the Spratly Islands inside the Philippines' exclusive economic zone;

Whereas in 1951, the United States and the Republic of the Philippines signed the United States-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty, making the two countries treaty allies;

Whereas in 1999, the Philippine Navy intentionally grounded the BRP Sierra Madre on Second Thomas Shoal to establish a maritime outpost in the Spratly Islands;

Whereas since grounding the BRP Sierra Madre, the Philippines has continuously hosted a contingent of Philippine Marines on the ship;

Whereas the People's Republic of China falsely claims "indisputable sovereignty" over Second Thomas Shoal and other areas surrounding the shoal;

Whereas the People's Republic of China has repeatedly engaged in increasingly hostile and aggressive behavior towards Filipino fishermen and Coast Guard vessels around Second Thomas Shoal, including by deploying tear gas, firing water cannons, deliberately ramming other vessels, and blocking Philippine vessels' maritime routes;

Whereas in December 2023, a vessel operated by the Coast Guard of the People's Republic of China surrounded a Filipino supply ship and assaulted it with water cannons as it operated in an area around Second Thomas Shoal;

Whereas on May 19, 2024, the Coast Guard of the People's Republic of China harassed and attempted to stop a Philippine vessel that was evacuating sick personnel from the BRP Sierra Madre;

Whereas on June 17, 2024, the Coast Guard of the People's Republic of China brutally assaulted a Philippine Coast Guard vessel en route to resupply the BRP Sierra Madre, which injured at least eight Filipino sailors and caused one Filipino sailor to lose a thumb;

Whereas on July 22, 2024, it was reported that the People's Republic of China and the Republic of the Philippines reached an agreement designed to reduce hostilities around Second Thomas Shoal;

Whereas on August 19, 2024, the People's Republic of China ignored the July 22, 2024, agreement and intentionally

rammed two Philippine Coast Guard vessels on a resupply mission near Second Thomas Shoal;

Whereas on August 26, 2024, the People’s Republic of China deployed 40 ships to block two Philippine vessels, which were attempting to resupply the BRP Teresa Magbanua, the flagship of the Philippine Coast Guard;

Whereas on August 31, 2024, vessels operated by the People’s Republic of China repeatedly rammed and surrounded the BRP Teresa Magbanua in an area east of Second Thomas Shoal, which caused damages to its hull;

Whereas Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has reiterated the United States policy that “an armed attack on Philippine Armed Forces’ public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific, including the South China Sea, would invoke U.S. defense commitments under our mutual defense treaty”;

Whereas the Department of State has reaffirmed that the United States “stands with its ally, the Philippines, and condemns the dangerous and escalatory actions by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) against lawful Philippine maritime operations . . .”; and

Whereas, the Department of State has also stated, “The United States reaffirms that Article IV of the 1951 United States-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty extends to armed attacks on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft—including those of its Coast Guard—anywhere in the South China Sea”: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) recognizes that—

1 (A) Second Thomas Shoal lies within the  
2 exclusive economic zone of the Republic of the  
3 Philippines; and

4 (B) the People's Republic of China's effort  
5 to harass and endanger Philippine vessels in the  
6 area are violations of Philippine sovereign  
7 rights;

8 (2) supports efforts to increase military assist-  
9 ance to the Republic of the Philippines to assist in  
10 its effort to combat blatant aggression by the Peo-  
11 ple's Republic of China in the South China Sea, in-  
12 cluding near Second Thomas Shoal;

13 (3) reaffirms the commitments made by the  
14 United States to the Republic of the Philippines in  
15 the 1951 United States-Philippines Mutual Defense  
16 Treaty; and

17 (4) encourages increased cooperation and train-  
18 ing with the Republic of the Philippines, including  
19 with the Philippine Coast Guard, and strong invest-  
20 ments in United States shipbuilding and other  
21 United States military capabilities to ensure that  
22 our obligations to the Philippines will be carried out.

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