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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 21

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS TO REVIEW THE PHILIPPINE'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE LIGHT OF THE RECENT HOSTAGE CRISIS INVOLVING OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKER ANGELO DE LA CRUZ WHICH LED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S EARLY PULL OUT OF THE FIFTY-ONE MEMBER PHILIPPINE CONTINGENT TO IRAQ, WITH THE END VIEW OF ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF OUR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs), AND RECOMMENDING MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN AND PROMOTE A TRULY INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY

WHEREAS, external sovereignty has been defined as "the power of the State to direct its relations with other States and is a manifestation of its real independence as evidenced by the foreign policies it negotiates for, adopts and pursues;"

WHEREAS, Section 7, Article I of the Constitution mandates that "the State shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination;"

WHEREAS, the Philippine government earlier sent a 96-member peacekeeping mission to Iraq, which has been viewed by some sectors as unnecessary and as an act supportive of the US-led war. Of the 96, the Filipino medical workers were the first to be withdrawn last March 2004, after serving their six-month tour of duty;

WHEREAS, the worst fears of some Filipinos in sending a peacekeeping force in Iraq materialized with the abduction made by Iraqi insurgents of 46-year-old Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz. The Khaled bin al-Waleed Corps of the Islamic Army in Iraq threatened to behead de la Cruz unless the Philippine government pulls out its remaining 51-member contingent in Iraq;

WHEREAS, the government's early pull out of the Philippine contingent in Iraq that was instrumental to de la Cruz' release has been criticized by some foreign states, saying the Philippines not only gave in to terrorists but even enticed terrorists to continue with their abductions of foreign nationals;

WHEREAS, to prevent a repeat of another hostage crisis involving a Filipino in a foreign land and to protect our 1.5 million OFWs in the Middle East, including 4,000 in Iraq, and millions more of OFWs in foreign countries, there is an immediate need for the Philippines to review its foreign policy;

WHEREAS, the Philippine government needs to overcome what some sectors of society observe as a "policy of fear" governing our foreign policy, and instead shift to a pro-OFW Philippine foreign policy;


WHEREAS, the Philippine government admitted that six other realities define its foreign policy. These are the influence of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the international Islamic community, the redefinition of the role of multilateral and inter-regional organizations like the United Nations and the World Trade Organizations, the country's need of direct foreign investment, and international tourism;

WHEREAS, to fulfill its obligations under the United Nations, the Philippines has sent and has no intention of pulling out its 55 Filipino police contingent serving with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo despite violence in the Balkan province;

WHEREAS, the United Nations has also asked the Philippines to send a 45-member medical contingent to troubled Haiti as part of a planned peacekeeping mission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to review the Philippine's foreign policy in the light of the recent hostage crisis involving overseas Filipino worker Angelo de la Cruz which led to the government's early pull out of the fifty-one member Philippine contingent to Iraq, with the end view of ensuring the protection of our overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and recommending measures to strengthen and promote a truly independent foreign policy

Adopted,


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.
Senator