

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

23 JAN -4 A11 :29

RECEIVED BY: 

SENATE

P.S. RES. No. 400

Introduced by SENATOR JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE RECENT AIRPORT NAVIGATION SYSTEM FIASCO THAT PARALYZED THE OPERATION OF THE NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NAIA), RISKED THE SAFETY OF TRAVELERS, AND POSED NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF STRENGTHENING AND ENSURING SAFETY IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY, AND PREVENTION OF ANY OTHER SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE

WHEREAS, on January 1, 2023, nearly three hundred (300) inbound and outbound flights in the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) were disrupted, affecting around 65,000 international and domestic passengers. Flights to and from Manila were either cancelled, rerouted, or delayed due to the incident¹;

WHEREAS, in a press statement released by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on 1 January 2023, Secretary Jaime Bautista said that the Air Traffic Management Center (ATMC) which serves as the facility for controlling and overseeing all inbound and outbound flights and overflights within the Philippine airspace, went down due to power outage, resulting to loss of communication, radio, radar, and

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-main-airport-scrambles-restore-normalcy-after-power-cut-2023-01-02/>

internet.² The Secretary said that the system issue caused disruption of flights in NAIA as well as in other airports in the country;

WHEREAS, the transportation Secretary further explained that the primary cause identified was a problem with the power supply and the degraded uninterrupted power supply which had no link to the commercial power and had to be connected to the latter manually; the secondary problem alleged was the power surge due to the power outage which affected the equipment³;

WHEREAS, while the DOTr announced that the Air Traffic Management Center (ATMC) resumed normal operations as of 5:50 p.m. on January 1, 2023, the airport navigation system fiasco created a domino effect, delaying several flights scheduled the following day;

WHEREAS, in a news report⁴, a Cebu Pacific representative said that the airline had to cancel 259 flights, affecting 26,253 passengers on January 1. Since the cancellations, delays and diversions have a consequential effect, the carrier has canceled 75 flights, affecting 11,578 passengers on January 2, 2023;

WHEREAS, the airport fiasco also affected and put the livelihood of some Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) at risk. According to Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) Undersecretary Hans Leo Cacdac, at least 3,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were affected by the airport crisis⁵;

WHEREAS, the incident posed a serious national security concern where the territorial integrity of the country might have been jeopardized and the vulnerability of the country's air navigation system exposed;

² <https://dotr.gov.ph/55-dotrnews/4609-2023-01-02-03-32-07.html>

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1191848>

⁵ <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/02/23/3000-ofws-affected-by-new-years-day-aviation-crisis>

WHEREAS, air passengers' safety and well-being were also put at risk due to the seemingly outdated system that is being used by the ATMC of the country's main airport facility;

WHEREAS, the DOTr subsequently announced that an oversight office under the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) called the Aerodrome and Air Navigation Safety Oversight Office (AANSOO), composed of engineers, air traffic controllers, pilots and a lawyer, will lead the investigation surrounding the airport fiasco;

WHEREAS, in view of the state and integrity of the country's air traffic system, DOTr Secretary Jimmy Bautista initially said that the country's Communications, Navigation, and Surveillance/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) System is around ten (10) years behind compared to our neighboring countries. He claimed that the government plans for an immediate upgrade of the ATM system which will cost more than 13 billion;⁶

WHEREAS, it is alarming and disturbing that this kind of glitch - loss of communication, radio, radar and internet access, can happen in the country's main airport, affecting not only the safety of airline passengers, but also of businesses, tourism, national security and the country's image to the whole world;

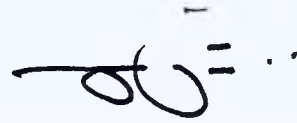
WHEREAS, it is imperative to inquire into the state and integrity of the country's Air Traffic Management System for us to be appraised of the need to upgrade and modernize the system in order to ensure that similar incidents will be averted;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to direct the Senate Committee on Public Services to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the recent airport navigation system fiasco that paralyzed the operation of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), risked the safety of travelers, and posed national security concerns, with the end in view of strengthening

⁶ <https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2023/01/03/496156/airlines-naia-operations-likely-to-normalize-within-3-days-miaa/>

and ensuring safety in the aviation industry, and prevention of any other similar incidents in the future.

Adopted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JOE EJERCITO', with a horizontal line extending to the left.

JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO