

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

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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 300

RECEIVED BY \_\_\_\_\_



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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT IT WAS ILL-ADVISED FOR THE TAIWANESE PRESIDENT TO VISIT THE SPRATLY ISLANDS WHEN THE ISLANDS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DECLARED AS A ZONE OF PEACE AND COOPERATION BY THE ASEAN AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, AND URGING ALL PARTIES TO EXERCISE PRUDENCE AND SELF-RESTRAINT IN THE CONDUCT OF ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD COMPLICATE OR ESCALATE DISPUTES AND AFFECT PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION

WHEREAS, the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, by the ASEAN and the People's Republic of China, states: "The parties concerned undertake to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force, through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea";

WHEREAS, the Declaration further states: "The Parties undertake to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability including, among others, refraining from action of inhabiting on the presently uninhabited islands, reefs, shoals, cays, and other features and to handle their differences in a constructive manner";

WHEREAS, last 2 February 2008, Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian paid a visit to Ligao Island, which is called Taiping by Taiwan, in the disputed Spratly Islands; Ligao Island is the biggest island being occupied by Philippine forces;

WHEREAS, the Spratly Islands is being claimed in whole or in part by Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei, China, Malaysia, and the Philippines; all claimants, except Brunei, have troops based on the archipelago of more than 100 islets, reefs, and atolls;

WHEREAS, the foreign press corps report that the Taiwan defense ministry purportedly said that the Taiwanese President visited the Spratly Islands in a move aimed at underscoring Taipei's claim to the disputed island group;

WHEREAS, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo issued the following statement on behalf of the Philippine Government, on the visit by the Taiwanese President: "The Philippines expresses serious concern over this reported development that works against the joint efforts by claimant countries in the South China Sea to achieve peace and stability in the region in accordance with the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in South China Sea";

WHEREAS, the Philippines urged all parties concerned to exercise prudence and self-restraint, and use diplomacy as a tool to settle disputes, in keeping with the spirit of the Declaration;

WHEREAS, Vietnam joined the Philippines in warning that the Taiwanese President's visit to the Spratly Islands could spark renewed tensions in the region;

WHEREAS, Chinese Embassy spokesperson Peng Xiubin said the People's Republic of China will continue to work with the Philippines to ensure peace and stability in the region;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, that it is the sense of the Senate that it was ill-advised for the Taiwanese President to visit the Spratly Islands when the Islands have already been declared as a zone of peace and cooperation by the ASEAN and the People's Republic of China, and urging all parties to exercise prudence and self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability in the region.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/dpm/jab