



SENATE

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Introduced by **Senator Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel**

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**RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS TO CONDUCT A FOREIGN POLICY AUDIT TO SCRUTINIZE AND REVIEW THE DIPLOMATIC ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) AGAINST CHINESE INCURSIONS IN THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA**

**WHEREAS**, Article II, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution states 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**, in a briefing in May 2018, DFA Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano stated that the Philippines has filed “several dozens, maybe 50-100<sup>1</sup>” diplomatic protests against the People’s Republic of China for its incursions in disputed territories in the West Philippine Sea, but when pressed to explain further and identify these protests, the Secretary refused to elaborate;

**WHEREAS**, what is of public record is only the note verbale filed by the Philippines to protest China’s installation of missile systems on three man-made islands in the Spratly Islands and the harassment by the Chinese Navy of Philippine Navy boats resupplying troops in Ayungin Shoal in May 11<sup>2</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, despite repeated entreaties by foreign policy experts to disclose the diplomatic protests and make them of public record<sup>3</sup>, the Duterte administration has refused to reveal details, insisting that a diplomatic approach and a mutual cooperation framework would be in the best interests of the Philippines;

**WHEREAS**, in the meantime, Chinese aggression in the West Philippine Sea remains unabated, putting livelihoods of the fisherfolk at risk<sup>4</sup> and violating the historic Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling in favor of the Philippines<sup>5</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, considering that the Philippine Senate has been granted by the Constitution the power to ratify treaties and in line with its check and balance powers, it has material interest in ensuring that the foreign policy adopted by the Executive is in the best interest of Filipino citizens;

**WHEREAS**, while diplomatic secrets do not need to be disclosed in minute detail, there is value in informing the public of diplomatic protests lodged by the government and this can help pressure foreign governments to conform to international commitments and norms;

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/655065/we-have-filed-several-dozens-of-diplomatic-protests-vs-china-cayetano-says/story/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/05/31/1820381/amid-silence-diplomatic-actions-philippines-sends-note-verbale-china>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/203842-philippines-publicize-protests-vs-china-gregory-poling>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/06/08/1822747/chinese-coast-guard-continue-harass-philipino-fishermen-scarborough-report>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/137202-philippines-china-ruling-case-west-philippine-sea>

***BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS RESOLVED***, by the Senate of the Philippines to direct the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct a foreign policy audit to scrutinize and review the diplomatic protests lodged by the Department of Foreign Affairs against the People's Republic of China with respect to Chinese incursions in the West Philippine Sea.

*Adopted,*

*Risa Hontiveros*  
SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS