

SENATE

P.S. RES. NO. 1267

Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PHILIPPINE MARITIME AND ADMIRALTY ZONES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE DISCOVERY OF A SUBMERSIBLE DRONE OFF THE COAST OF BRGY. INAWARAN, SAN PASCUAL, MASBATE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING ITS IMPLICATIONS ON PHILIPPINE NATIONAL SECURITY

1 Whereas, on 30 December 2024, a submersible drone was discovered by three
2 fishermen off the coast of Brgy. Inawaran, San Pascual, Masbate. Initial assessments
3 suggest that the six-foot drone is likely of Chinese origin and is constructed from PVC and
4 metal, functioning as a remote-controlled electronic device possibly used for
5 communication and navigation;¹

6 Whereas, the drone was found deactivated, and ongoing investigations aim to
7 determine its operational status and intent;²

8 Whereas, Philippine National Police Regional Office-5 (PRO-5) Director PGen.
9 Andre Dizon has indicated that preliminary research points to the drone being a Chinese
10 underwater navigation and communication system;³

11 Whereas, Section 4 (b)⁴ of the Philippine Maritime Zones Act (RA 12064)
12 specifically provides that "the internal waters of the Philippines comprise the waters

¹<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/01/02/2411357/navy-probes-origin-underwater-drone-found-masbate>

²<https://dzh.com.ph/post/suspected-chinese-submarine-drone-recovered-in-masbate-waters>

³<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1240904>

⁴ SEC. 4. *Waters Inside the Baselines of the Philippines.* - Consistent with the Constitution, the Philippines has sovereignty over all waters inside its archipelagic baselines as established by Republic Act No. 9522, as well as the waters on the landward side of the baselines of all Philippine territories located outside of the archipelagic baselines, including the airspace above those waters and the seabed and subsoil underneath.

The exercise of sovereignty by the Philippines over these waters is subject to its international obligations as provided in the UNCLOS and other relevant treaties to which the Philippines is a Party.

1 delimited by NAMRIA from archipelagic waters and the waters on the landward side of
2 the baselines of Philippine territories located outside of the archipelagic baselines and
3 that **foreign vessels have no navigational rights in the internal waters of the**
4 **Philippines, unless expressly authorized by the Philippine Government."**

5 Whereas, Section 10 of the Philippine Maritime Zones Act mandates that if the
6 submersible drone was used for marine scientific research, the same must benefit the
7 Filipino people and requires government authorization;⁵

8 Whereas, Section 13 of the said law provides that the Philippine shall recognize
9 the rights and privileges of foreign vessels and aircraft in its maritime zones under
10 conditions of reciprocity and mutual respect, and **reserves the right to take necessary**
11 **legal and diplomatic actions against States whose vessels and aircraft do not**
12 **abide by, or act inconsistently with, the UNCLOS and international law**⁶;

In harmony with these international obligations, the sovereign waters of the Philippines inside its baselines shall be treated as follows:

(a) The waters inside the archipelagic baselines of the Philippines are considered archipelagic water, except for bays, estuaries and other waters considered as internal waters, as delimited from archipelagic waters in accordance with Article 50 of the UNCLOS.

The archipelagic sea lanes passage in these archipelagic waters shall be exercised in the sea lanes to be determined by law or a Presidential issuance, as appropriate.

The delimitation between archipelagic waters and internal waters shall be made by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) and marked on the official charts of the Philippines. The archipelagic sea lanes shall also be marked on these charts. The charts shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in accordance with Articles 16 and 53 of the UNCLOS.

(b) The internal waters of the Philippines comprise the waters delimited by NAMRIA from archipelagic waters and the waters on the landward side of the baselines of Philippine territories located outside of the archipelagic baselines.

Foreign vessels have no navigational rights in the internal waters of the Philippines, unless expressly authorized by the Philippine Government.

⁵ SEC. 10. Marine Scientific Research. - The Government shall adopt measures in accordance with Part XIII "Marine Scientific Research" of the UNCLOS, and other existing laws and treaties, to ensure that marine scientific research, whether undertaken by local or foreign entities, in the maritime zones declared herein, shall redound to the benefit of the Filipino people.

⁶ SEC. 13. *Due Regard and Mutual Respect.* - The Philippines shall give due regard to the rights and duties of foreign states, and foreign states shall act with due regard to the rights and duties of the Philippines, relative to the maritime zones as provided under this Act, the UNCLOS, and international law.

The Philippine shall recognize the rights and privileges of foreign vessels and aircraft in its maritime zones under conditions of reciprocity and mutual respect, and reserves the right to take necessary legal and diplomatic actions against States whose vessels and aircraft do not abide by, or act inconsistently with, the UNCLOS and international law.

1 Whereas, for violations of the provisions of this law, appropriate sanctions for
2 violations of these provisions may include administrative fines as outlined in Section 15
3 of the said law;⁷

4 Whereas, there is an urgency in determining the drone's origins and its compliance
5 with Philippine maritime laws, specifically the Philippine Maritime Zones Act (RA 12064)
6 and the Archipelagic Sea Lanes Law (RA 12065) as its presence raises critical concerns
7 regarding its origin and implication on our country's territorial integrity and national
8 security;⁸;

9 Whereas, it is crucial to ascertain whether the drone's presence constitutes a
10 violation of Philippine laws, considering its discovery inside our archipelagic waters over
11 which the Philippines has sovereignty;

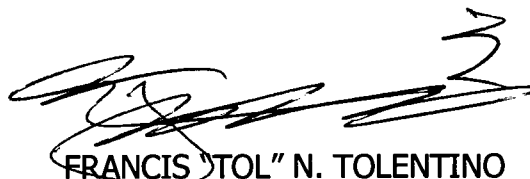
12 Whereas, if proven that the discovered submersible drone was used by a foreign
13 state to conduct underwater surveillance be it for military or as part of marine scientific
14 research without the consent of the Republic of the Philippines, the same constitute a
15 violation of our sovereignty; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

16 **BE IT RESOLVED**, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines, to
17 direct as it hereby directs the Senate Special Committee on Philippine Maritime and
18 Admiralty Zones to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the discovery of the
19 submersible drone off the coast of San Pascual, Masbate focusing on its origins,
20 operational capabilities, and compliance with Philippine maritime laws;

21 **RESOLVED FURTHER**, that the committee shall seek the input of all relevant
22 government agencies, including the Philippine Navy and the Department of Foreign
23 Affairs, to ensure a thorough and coordinated investigation of the matter;

24 **RESOLVED FINALLY**, that a copy of this resolution be furnished to the Office of
25 the President and other pertinent agencies for their information and necessary action.

Adopted,


FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO
Senator

⁷ SEC. 15. Penal Sanctions. - Any violations of the rights of the Philippines as provided under this Act shall be addressed and penalized through pertinent existing laws and regulations. In the absence thereof, any violation shall be subject to an administrative fine of not less than Six hundred thousand US dollar (US\$600,000.00) but not more than One million US dollars (US\$1,000,000.00), or the equivalent in Philippine currency.

⁸<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/260010/chinese-drone-retrieved-from-masbate-waters-piques-navy>