Republic of the Philippines

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 678

Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Representatives CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE,
FERDINAND R. GAITE and EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women’s Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO
TERMINATE THE RP-US VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT, ENHANCED
DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT, MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY AND
OTHER SIMILAR AGREEMENTS AND TO BAR ANY FUTURE PLANS GIVING
ACCESS OF PHILIPPINE MILITARY BASES TO AMERICAN AND OTHER
FOREIGN FORCES

WHEREAS, during his State of the Nation Address held July 23, 2018, President Rodrigo Duterte said that the Philippines, under his watch, will pursue and assert an independent foreign policy;

WHEREAS, on January 23, 2020, President Duterte threatened the termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States following the cancellation of Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa’s US visa;

WHEREAS, activists, progressive groups and organizations have long demanded the cancellation or abrogation of the VFA, along with Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) and the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT). In fact, one of the mobilizations to call US troops out of the Philippines was held last October 4, 2016 wherein people urged President Duterte to terminate these onerous agreements with the US after his criticisms to the US government at that time;

WHEREAS, in the House of Representatives, the Makabayan Bloc consistently filed house resolutions calling for the scrapping of the VFA and EDCA to assert Philippine sovereignty and protection of the Filipino people. Numerous cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the US troops, as well as the US advancement of its political and economic interest masked behind VFA and other defense agreements, were highlighted as some of the justifiable and legitimate reasons to terminate such onerous, one-sided agreements;

2 https://www.bulatlat.com/2016/10/05/end-vfa-edca-progressives-urge-duterte-act-anti-us-imperialism-tirades/
WHEREAS, allowing US forces and their allies to establish de facto bases in the Philippines, not only betrays the people's 1991 verdict of terminating the onerous RP-US Military Bases Agreement but also creates serious implications to the country and the region's pursuit of peaceful settlement of territorial disputes;

WHEREAS, the US is only interested in advancing its own political and economic interests and is using the 20-year old bilateral Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) to take advantage of the country's strategic geographic location, forces and facilities in its bid to counter China;

WHEREAS, the Philippine government should not let other nations dictate how we should act and deal with other countries, especially pertaining to territorial disputes;

WHEREAS, US presence and intervention, using the VFA as an excuse, have long been undermining attempts for peaceful resolution of disputes between the Philippines and other countries. It has also violated Philippine laws as reports show de facto basing and US troops' direct involvement in combat operations of the Philippine military;

WHEREAS, during the heated tension between the US and Iran, which resulted from the US assassination of Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani and worsening US aggression in the Middle East, the MDT posed a possibility that the Philippines will send troops and aid the US in case the tension escalated into war, which endangered the lives of Filipino people, especially the overseas workers;

WHEREAS, the Filipino people should be spared from being embroiled in US aggression against other countries;

WHEREAS, justice should also be served for the past and continuing transgressions of the US forces against citizens and Philippine sovereignty, such as the citing VFA provisions to protect US troops from being investigated and prosecuted for criminal acts against Filipinos and to escape accountability for damages as in the case of the Tubbataha Reef grounding;

WHEREAS, Congress should call for the termination or abrogation of the VFA, EDCA, MDT and other similar onerous defense agreements because it is gravely disadvantageous to the country and our people. More importantly, abrogating these unfavorable agreements is to assert Philippine sovereignty and protect the Filipinos and oppose US attempts to use the Philippines for its political and economic interests in Asia;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives expresses its support to terminate and abrogate the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, Mutual Defense Treaty and other similar onerous agreements and to bar any future plans giving access of Philippine military bases to American and other foreign forces.

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3 https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1209898/breaking-duterte-to-side-with-us-if-filipinos-are-harmed-in-middle-east-ruckus
Adopted,

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FRANCIA L. CASTRO
ACT Teacher Partylist

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
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REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist