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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4750



Introduced by REP. JESUS ANGEL MANUEL "BONG" C. SUNTAY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines declares that "the Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State. Its goal is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory." Moreover, Article XII, Section 2 affirms the State's full control and supervision over the nation's archipelagic waters, territorial seas, and exclusive economic zone.

As an archipelagic nation located at the crossroads of major sea lanes in the Asia-Pacific, the Philippines faces unique security challenges. Maritime disputes in the West Philippine Sea, increasing foreign incursions, piracy, smuggling, and natural calamities have all highlighted the urgent need for a stronger and more responsive naval defense posture. The Philippine Navy, as the maritime arm of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), has the mandate to safeguard national sovereignty, protect territorial integrity, and secure maritime resources.

Despite this, the Philippine Navy's limited basing infrastructure hampers its ability to sustain presence and conduct timely operations across the country's vast maritime domain. Recognizing these limitations, the Philippine Navy has developed a Strategic Basing Plan 2040 to identify priority sites for the establishment of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) that will serve as platforms for surveillance, deterrence, and rapid deployment.

This bill seeks to institutionalize and operationalize that vision by enacting the Archipelagic Defense of the Philippines Act, thereby providing the necessary legal and budgetary framework for establishing and developing forward operating bases in key maritime locations.

The establishment of Forward Operating Bases is a strategic imperative for a maritime nation like the Philippines. These bases will enhance maritime security by enabling the Navy to project presence and respond swiftly to threats in the West Philippine Sea, northern frontier (Batanes), southern approaches (Tawi-Tawi, Palawan), and eastern seaboard (Aurora, Isabela, Samar, Quezon); improve humanitarian and disaster response by serving as staging areas for relief and recovery operations in typhoon-prone and disaster-vulnerable areas; deter foreign incursions and illegal activities such as piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing through sustained patrols and monitoring; support economic security by safeguarding shipping routes,

1 fisheries, and offshore energy resources critical to national development; and advance
2 military modernization by institutionalizing infrastructure investment consistent
3 with long-term naval development goals.
4

5 This measure provides the legal framework, institutional backing, and initial funding
6 for a vital component of the Philippines' national defense posture. By supporting the
7 Philippine Navy's Strategic Basing Plan 2040, the bill contributes to the broader
8 objective of ensuring a secure, sovereign, and resilient archipelagic nation.
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11 In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.
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REP. JESUS "BONG" C. SUNTAY

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8 **HOUSE BILL NO. 4750**
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10 Introduced by REP. JESUS MANUEL BONG SUNTAY
11

12
13 **AN ACT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE AND ESTABLISH THE PHILIPPINE**
14 **NAVY FORWARD OPERATING BASES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR**
15 **THE CREATION THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**
16

17
18 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
19 Congress assembled:

20
21 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the "*Archipelagic Defense*
22 *of the Philippines Act.*"
23

24 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – The State declares that the Armed Forces
25 of the Philippines (AFP) is the protector of the people and the State. The goal of the
26 AFP is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory.
27

28 The State likewise recognizes the mission of the Philippine Navy, as a branch of the
29 AFP, to organize, train, equip, maintain, develop and deploy forces for the prompt
30 and sustained naval and maritime operations in support of the Unified Commands in
31 the accomplishment of the AFP mission.
32

33 It is the policy of the State to modernize the AFP to a level where it can effectively and
34 fully perform its constitutional mandate to uphold the sovereignty and preserve the
35 patrimony of the Republic of the Philippines.
36

37 In order to effectively carry out the mandate of the Philippine Navy, the establishment
38 of forward operating bases in the sites identified by the Philippine Navy in its
39 Strategic Basing Plan 2040 is hereby pursued by the State.
40

41 **SECTION 3. *Scope and Limitations.*** – The Act shall be limited in scope,
42 application, and effectivity to the sites identified by the Philippine Navy in its
43 Strategic Basing Plan 2040 as priority sites, as enumerated in Section 5 of this Act,
44 for the establishment of its bases and installations.
45

46 **SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

- 47 a. *Forward Operating Bases (FOB)* - It shall refer to a small-scale naval and
48 military facility or outpost where the Philippine Navy can carry out its basic
49 functions and duties and which can serve as a potential site for future upgrade
50 and expansion, for national security purposes.

- 1 b. *Strategic Basing Plan 2040* - It shall refer to the existing plan of the Philippine
2 Navy to acquire and develop properties for the establishment of bases and
3 installations in strategic sites throughout the country.
4

5 **SECTION 5. *Priority Sites.*** – The strategic locations identified by the Philippine
6 Navy Directorate for Real Estate Management as priority sites in its Strategic Basing
7 Plan 2040 by reason of its strategic location shall serve as the sites of the FOBs.
8

9 These sites include and shall be limited to the following:

- 10 a. Busuanga, Palawan;
11 b. Subic Bay, Zambales;
12 c. Mavulis Island, Batanes;
13 d. Lubang Island, Mindoro;
14 e. Surigao, Surigao del Norte;
15 f. Allen, Northern Samar;
16 g. Polilio Island, Quezon
17 h. Bicobian, Divilacan, Isabela;
18 i. Casiguran, Aurora;
19 j. Sarangani, Davao Occidental;
20 k. Balabac, Palawan; and
21 l. Mapun, Tawi-Tawi
22

23 **SECTION 6. *Masterplan for the Establishment of Forward Operating***
24 ***Bases.*** – To be able to attain the policy and objectives set forth in this Act, there shall
25 be established a Masterplan Governing the Establishment of Forward Operating
26 Bases, hereinafter referred to as the Masterplan, which shall be confidential, and shall
27 contain the priority sites, the schedule, the proposed facilities therein, the estimated
28 cost of the same, among others.
29

30 In particular, the Masterplan shall contain the following:

- 31 a. Set a timeline for the acquisition of the properties in the priority sites, as
32 defined in Section 5, the planning for the development of the same, and the
33 development of the forward operating bases itself, provided that the
34 timelines to be set shall not exceed three years; and
35 b. Features of the proposed facilities to be acquired, developed, constructed
36 or installed in the forward operating bases in the priority areas.
37

38 **SECTION 7. *Preparation of the Masterplan.*** – Within sixty (60) days from the
39 effectivity of this Act, upon the recommendation of the Secretaries of National
40 Defense and Budget and Management, the Masterplan shall be submitted by the
41 Philippine Navy for the approval of the President of the Philippines.
42

43 **SECTION 8. *Funding.*** – An appropriation of One Billion Pesos
44 (₱1,000,000,000.00) shall be allocated for the initial budgetary requirements of this
45 Act. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the implementation of the
46 Masterplan as provided for in this Act shall be included in the Annual General
47 Appropriation Act (GAA) of the Department of National Defense.
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49 **SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part, section or provision of this Act
50 is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such
51 declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

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2 **SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and
3 regulations, or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of
4 this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.
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6 **SECTION 11. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
7 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
8

9 Approved,