



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 5000

INTRODUCED BY REP. ARNAN C. PANALIGAN

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING FORWARD
OPERATING BASES IN STRATEGIC AREAS OF THE PHILIPPINES
UNDER THE PHILIPPINE NAVY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFORE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

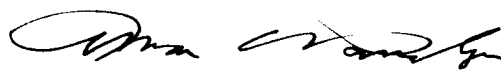
The Philippines is a maritime nation. The total maritime areas of the Philippines, including its Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), is approximately 2.2 million square kilometers. The Philippine Archipelago is composed of 7,641 islands. Our coastlines is 36,389 kilometers.

Our Exclusive Economic Zones is rich in marine life which can address the food security needs of our people, contribute to the development of the domestic fishing industry and provide livelihood to millions of Filipino fisherfolk. It is also believed that the seabed and subsoil within our Exclusive Economic Zone contain mineral resources and oil and natural gas reserves. The waters in our EEZ also offer potential for harnessing wind and tidal power. All of these can address our energy security requirements.

Our maritime areas are also vital to our national security and in the safeguarding of our territorial integrity. The famous naval strategist, Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan argued in his seminal work "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History" that: "When the sea not only borders, or surrounds, but also separates a country into two or more parts, control of the sea is not only desirable but vitally necessary."

In our case, we can enhance and maintain control of the seas surrounding our archipelago and separating our 7,641 islands if we have a strong naval presence in strategic areas of the country along our archipelagic sea lanes and in our maritime zones. This can be done if naval forward operating bases are established in said areas. It will enable the Philippine Navy to effectively secure our maritime areas and to deploy its assets rapidly when necessary.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


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ESTABLISHING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING FORWARD OPERATING
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PHILIPPINE NAVY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:—

Section 1. Declaration of Policy. — As provided for in Article I, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution, it is the policy of the State to secure the preservation of its sovereignty and the integrity of the national territory as defined in Article 1, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution.

To attain this end, it is likewise the policy of the State to modernize and upgrade the Armed Forces of the Philippines and build its deterrent capabilities so that it can effectively fulfill its constitutional mandate to preserve the Republic, defend the country from its foes, foreign or domestic and protect the Filipino people.

As a maritime nation, it is imperative for the Philippines to maintain a strong and multi-capable naval force that can effectively patrol and secure the vast maritime areas of the Philippines, comprising of its territorial seas and exclusive economic zones. It is therefore the policy of the State to enhance the deterrent capabilities of the Philippine Navy as the first line of national defense against external threats and actual aggression. In order for the Philippine Navy to carry out its vital function of securing the country's maritime zones and its archipelagic sea lanes, the State, as a matter of policy, recognizes the imperative need for the establishment of naval operating bases in strategic areas of the Philippine archipelago.

Section 2. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a) Forward Operating Base (FOB) — shall refer to a naval facility or installation where the Philippine Navy can carry out its basic functions and duties. It shall consist of berthing facilities for naval vessels, drydock and similar facilities, quarters for naval officers and personnel, ammunition depot and storage facilities, radar installations

and other communications equipment. The FOB may also host shore-based missile systems and other weapons necessary for an effective deterrence.

- b) Strategic Basing Plan 2040 – shall refer to the existing plan identified by the Philippine Navy Directorate for Real Estate Management as priority sites for Forward Operating Bases throughout the country.

Section 3. Priority Sites for Forward Operating Bases. – The strategic locations identified by the Philippine Navy Directorate for Real Estate Management as priority sites in its Strategic Basing Plan 2040 by reason of its strategic location shall serve as the sites of the Forward Operating Bases.

These sites include but shall not be limited to the following:

1. Municipality of Busuanga, Palawan
2. Balabac Island, Palawan
3. Subic Bay, Zambales
4. Mavulis Island, Batanes
5. Lubang Island, Occidental Mindoro
6. Surigao City, Surigao del Norte
7. Municipality of Allen, Northern Samar
8. Polilio Island, Quezon
9. Municipality of Divilacan, Isabela
10. Municipality of Casiguran, Aurora
11. Sarangani Island, Davao Occidental
12. Mapun Island, Tawi-tawi

Section 4. Forward Operating Bases may be established in other sites as may be determined by the Department of National Defense upon the recommendation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines with the approval of the President of the Philippines.

Section 5. Within sixty (60) days upon the approval of this Act, the Philippine Navy shall prepare a Master Plan for the establishment of forward operating bases. On the recommendation of the Secretary of National Defense, the said Master Plan shall be approved by the President of the Philippines.

Section 6. Funding. – The amount of Five Billion Pesos (Php 5,000,000,000.00) shall be initially appropriated for the implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the establishment, operation and maintenance of the forward operating bases shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

Section 7. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the provisions not affected thereby.

Section 8. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders and other regulations or issuances or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 9. - Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette.

Approved,