

Filed on July 31, 2006

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Resolution No. 1313

**Introduced by AKBAYAN Representatives Ana Theresia Hontiveros-Baraquel,
Loretta Ann P. Rosales and Mario 'Mayong' Joyo Aguja**

**A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON NATIONAL
DEFENSE AND SECURITY, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND GOOD GOVERNMENT TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PHILIPPINES'
PARTICIPATION IN UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS AND ALLEGED
IRREGULARITIES IN THE USE AND MANAGEMENT
BY THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) OF
THE UNITED NATION SUPPORT FUND FOR PEACEKEEPING**

Whereas, the Philippines is a member of the United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations as a Troop Contributing Country (TCC);

Whereas, after being inactive for several years, the Philippines began sending troops again beginning 1999 in support of the UN peacekeeping efforts, in particular for the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET), UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAFT), UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNIMISSET), UN Mission in Liberia (UNIMIL), UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI);

Whereas, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UN and the Philippines, as represented by the country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, lays down the terms of the Philippines' participation in each peacekeeping mission;

Whereas, the Armed Forces of the Philippines is the implementing agency of the MOU;

Whereas, the MOU specifies the reimbursements that the AFP shall receive for the expenses that it would incur for the deployment of troops for UN peacekeeping missions;

Whereas, the reimbursements cover the allowance for the soldiers, or the Troop Cost Allowance (TCA), their subsistence pay, and the equipments that the AFP supposedly has to purchase to support the troops, or the Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE);

Whereas, the UN wires the reimbursements directly to a bank account created by the AFP specifically for its UN peacekeeping operations;

Whereas, due to the country's participation in UN peacekeeping duties, the AFP received from the UN the amount of \$25, 012, 939 USD and \$10, 026, 361 USD, as reimbursements for TCA and COE respectively, from 1999 to 2005;

Whereas, a uniform pay of one thousand and twenty-eight US dollars (\$1, 028.00) per month is given by the UN as allowance for every soldier regardless of rank for all participating countries, US\$1,000 of which is given by the AFP to every Filipino soldier in UN missions abroad from 1999 to 2005;

Whereas, a Filipino soldier participating in a peacekeeping mission would receive the allowance from the UN on top of his or her regular salary;

Whereas, this year, the AFP unilaterally decided to reduce by forty percent (40%) the allowance that a Filipino soldier receives for joining a UN peacekeeping mission even though the AFP gets full TCA from the UN;

Whereas, the AFP implemented a scheme where the base pay of soldiers in peacekeeping missions with ranks ranging from corporal to master sergeant is tripled while those from captains to colonels get 150% more than their salary, such that a soldier who receives a monthly salary of P10, 000 will only get P30, 000 instead of the P50, 000 additional allowance from the peacekeeping operations;

Whereas, the basis of the allowance cut is a study conducted by the AFP's Peacekeeping Operations Center (PKOC), headed Col. Dante Balao, that claims that the UN reimbursements fail to cover all the expenses incurred by the AFP every time it deploys troops for peacekeeping missions;

Whereas, the same study claims that the AFP spends a total of P76 million for the deployment of a peacekeeping contingent with 165 members for six months while the UN reimburses only P60 million;

Whereas, according to the PKOC, the UN Support Fund does not cover pre-deployment activities such as trainings and other logistical requirements, hence the decision to cut the Troop Cost Allowance to recover the losses of the government;

Whereas, a report by *Newsbreak* magazine refutes the AFP claim that the government is losing money because of its UN peacekeeping duties;

Whereas, the same *Newsbreak* report states that the AFP has actually been saving money from its peacekeeping operations;

Whereas, according to *Newsbreak*, with 22, 000 soldiers deployed for the last five years and with a total of US\$25 million reimbursement for Troop Cost Allowance, the AFP was actually able to put aside US\$3 million or around P150 million;

Whereas, the *Newsbreak* report also states that the Armed Forces of the Philippines was also able to save funds from the UN reimbursements for the COE by recycling old requirements and by using military vehicles and armaments donated by foreign governments to the Philippines, which resulted in complaints from Filipino soldiers in UN missions abroad because of substandard and second-hand military equipments;

Whereas, from the TCA reimbursement for 330 Filipino soldiers currently deployed in Haiti and Liberia, the AFP would be collecting a monthly saving of almost P8 million with the implementation of the 40% allowance reduction;

Whereas, through a memorandum from the Department of Foreign Affairs to the AFP dated March 21, 2006, the Philippines' Permanent Mission to the United Nations already inquired into the unilateral decision of the AFP to cut the TCA and demanded a justification for the new payment scheme;

Whereas, despite the multi-million savings from the UN Support Fund, *Newsbreak* reported that a COA official in AFP disclosed that the military only has P79 million in the account for the UN funds, an amount that would not be enough for the allowance of Filipino soldiers that are currently serving for UN peacekeeping activities;

Whereas, according to *Newsbreak*, a project to establish an international peacekeeping facility in Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac, through the savings from the UN Support Fund was suspended because of grave construction defects, a proof of how the UN fund is being mismanaged by the military;

Whereas, the *Newsbreak* report also notes that the controversial dollar transactions of Major General Carlos Garcia, the former AFP deputy staff for comptrollership who is facing plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan, coincide with the dollar remittances from the UN for the AFP's participation in peacekeeping missions;

Whereas, as early as 2002, Executive Order 97 was issued to create an oversight committee for the country's participation in UN peacekeeping operations and yet it was only this year, after Filipino soldiers deployed in Haiti complained of the pay cut, that the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of National Defense, and the AFP, decided to form the committee;

Whereas, without proper equipments, Filipino soldiers deployed for UN peacekeeping missions in conflict-prone countries are more exposed to danger than their counterparts from other countries;

Whereas, the standardized salary scheme of the United Nations is based on the principles of equity and equal opportunities and therefore should be complied with and respected by the Philippines;

Whereas, the so-called savings from the UN Support Fund is treated by the AFP as a discretionary account, and, without proper oversight, it is feared that the fund is being used for 'conversion';

Whereas, Congress must exercise its oversight powers to review existing policies on the country's participation in UN peacekeeping missions and to establish a transparent and rational use of the UN Support Fund for peacekeeping operations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved that the House Committees on National Defense and Security, Foreign Affairs, and Good Government be directed to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the Philippines' participation in UN peacekeeping operations and alleged irregularities in the use and management by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) of the United Nation Support Fund for peacekeeping.

Adopted,

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REP. MARIO JOYO-AGUJA
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