

PAYING TRIBUTE TO COL. ROBERT PELLETIER

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Col. Robert (Bob) Pelletier, who will retire this year from the United States Army Reserve after 30 years of outstanding service.

Col. Pelletier's career has spanned decades and he has served in various places all over the world including Kuwait, Iraq, Korea, Honduras, Germany, and Afghanistan. He served in both Operation Desert Storm and the Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In 1984 following graduation from The Citadel in South Carolina, Col. Pelletier entered helicopter flight school at Fort Rucker in Alabama. After completing flight school, Pelletier served in the 4th Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment until January of 1989, holding various leadership assignments during his tenure.

In June of 1989, he began his tenure as commander of the Headquarters and Service Company in Kuwait and Iraq. While in the Middle East, Col. Pelletier also served as a Plans and Operation Officer playing an important role in coordinating the United States' efforts in Operation Desert Storm.

At the conclusion of his service in the Middle East, Col. Pelletier continued his service overseas, first in Musan, Korea and later in Honduras, before returning home to the United States in 1995. Col. Pelletier landed in Omaha, NE, after he joined the United States Army Reserves and was placed as the Maintenance Branch Chief of the 561st Corps Support Group.

In 2003, Col. Pelletier traveled to Germany and Kuwait along with the 3rd COSCOM to offer support in Operation Iraqi Freedom becoming the Director of Rail Operations and Reconstruction until March of 2004.

In January of 2009, Col. Pelletier became the Department of Army's Liaison to the Governor of Nebraska for Homeland Security and Defense, a position through which he has offered superb service to the state of Nebraska.

Col. Pelletier has been decorated with many awards for his outstanding service including the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf and a Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf. He is also the recipient of the Joint Service Commendation Medal along with the Army Achievement Medal.

Col. Pelletier and his wife, Terry are current residents of Omaha, NE where he is a Regional Operations Manager for the Union Pacific Railroad.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Col. Robert Pelletier for his outstanding 30 years of service to our country and the state of Nebraska.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took of-

fice, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$17,484,285,711,524.06. We've added \$6,857,408,662,610.98 to our debt in 5 years. This is over \$6.8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

CONDEMNING CHINA FOR VIOLATING VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

HON. ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, as Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, which has broad jurisdiction for U.S. policy affecting the region, including Vietnam and China, I rise today to strongly condemn China for violating Vietnam's sovereignty in the South China Sea and to call upon the U.S. to issue a clear and decisive statement of response.

On May 2, 2014, China anchored HD981 rig in Vietnamese waters and deployed dozens of naval vessels to support its provocative actions. On May 3 and May 5, China issued notices banning all vessels from entering the area and stating that HD981 rig will conduct exploratory drilling. HD981 is anchored totally within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf of Vietnam, about 120 nautical miles from Ly Son island of Vietnam.

I thank U.S. Senator JOHN MCCAIN for his leadership in unequivocally stating that China's territorial claims to the waters have no basis in international law. Simply put, China's provocative actions are an escalation of its intent to threaten peace and maritime security in the East Sea.

Since 2009, China has escalated its claims of the "nine-dash line", cut the ship cables of the "Binh Minh II" and "Viking II (May and June 2011), established "Sansha City" (June 2012), implemented "measures to enforce 'Fishery Law of the People's Republic of China' (entering into force since January 2014), enhanced oil explorations in disputed areas, attacked Vietnamese fishing vessels, launched patrol boats, and conducted military exercises in the South China Sea to flex its power and deter other claimants.

All the while the U.S. response has been negligible, although the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific has held hearings on the matter and several Members, including myself, have introduced Resolutions to promote a peaceful and collaborative resolution to any and all disputes in the South China Sea.

I am especially disappointed by the State Department's weak response to China's recent aggression. U.S. Department of State spokeswoman Jen Psaki stated, "Vietnam has declared a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone based on its coast line in accordance with the law of the sea. Then we call on China because China has a different view on that. That's why we continue to call on both sides not to take provocative or unilateral actions given this is occurring in disputed waters near those islands and these events, of course,

point to the need for claimants to clarify, their claims in accordance with international law and reach agreement of what types of activities should be permissible within disputed areas such as these waters."

I call upon the State Department to issue a more clear, definitive, and concise statement than this. Once more, as Senator MCCAIN stated, China's claims have no basis in international law, and the U.S. State Department should not shirk from saying so. I join with Senator MCCAIN in calling upon China's leaders to take immediate steps to de-escalate tensions, and I call upon the U.S. to lead the way. For historical purposes, I have submitted this statement with supporting documentation so that there is no dispute about the facts or about where I stand.

[As of May 5, 2014]

FACTSHEET ON OPERATIONS OF CHINA'S HD-981 OIL RIG IN VIETNAM'S WATERS

On May 2, 2014, Vietnamese authorities announce that at 5:22 am on May 1, 2014, the drilling rig HD-981 and 3 oil service vessels of China were spotted as going south from the northwest of Tri Ton island which belongs to Vietnam's Hoang Sa Archipelago (Paracels). At 4:00 pm May 2, 2014, the drilling rig RD-981 was set afloat at the location of 15°29'58" North latitude and 111°12'06" East longitude of Tri Ton island with 27 protecting ships. This location is about 130 nautical miles off Vietnam's coast and 119 nautical miles off Vietnam's Ly Son island. To date, the number of Chinese vessels has gone up to more than 50. The location of the rig lies well within the oil block No. 143 of Vietnam, undeniably within Vietnam's exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

2. In the last few days, Vietnam has continuously communicated with China expressing its serious concerns. Vietnam has reiterated and stressed that "the location that the Chinese drilling rig HD-981 and protecting vessels operate is undeniably within Vietnam's exclusive economic zone and continental shelf; the operations of this drilling rig and protecting vessels have seriously violated Vietnam's sovereignty, sovereign rights, and national jurisdiction as stipulated by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982 UNCLOS), the 2002 Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), other related agreements between the two countries' leaders, and Vietnam-China basic principles on settlement of sea issues. Vietnam asks China to immediately withdraw the drilling rig and protecting vessels out of Vietnam's waters".

Viet Nam has sufficient historical evidence, legal basis, and de facto administration over Hoang Sa to assert its sovereign rights and national jurisdiction over its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Vietnam requests that China respect Vietnam's exercise of sovereignty over Hoang Sa, sovereign rights and jurisdiction over its exclusive economic zone; and concurrently proposes to China to settle the disputes over Hoang Sa and other disputes related to Vietnam's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction through negotiations and other peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Charter and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Vietnam totally rejects and resolutely protests China's arguments that the "operation of drilling rig HD-981 is an ordinary activity south of Zhongjianshan island (Tri Ton) of Xisha (Hoang Sa) islands", and has nothing to do with Vietnam's continental shelf and exclusive economic zone; this is "an area of the