

# Philippines Employs 'Lumpia Strategy' to Counter Chinese Expansion

AYUNGIN ISLAND, Philippines, Nov. 1, 2013 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – An under-the-radar struggle for disputed island reefs is evolving in the South China Sea, between China and the Philippines, and the tactics employed by each side are named after foods, according to Reina Prince, global strategist for the NGO Friends Beyond Borders.

The area called Reed Bank contains hundreds of relatively unimpressive deserted islands and shoals, but what is really valuable to both nations is under the surface. Some estimates are that the seabed beneath the area holds 55 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, as well as 5.4 billion barrels of crude oil.

China has aggressively asserted its claims to the area, sending more and more navy ships, research vessels, and fishing boats over the last few years. For its part, the Philippines has grounded an abandoned WWII era ship, the Sierra Madre, on a lonely reef in the disputed area, and manned it with eight Marines.

General Zhang Zhaozhong, of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, has described China's long term plan as "the Cabbage Strategy" which means the effort to flood a disputed area of island-dotted ocean with so many boats that "the island is thus wrapped layer by layer like a cabbage."

Referring to recent efforts to take land from the Philippines, Zhang said "We should do more such things in the future. For those small islands, only a few troopers are able to station on each of them, but there is no food or even drinking water there. If we carry out the cabbage strategy, you will not be able to send food and drinking water onto the islands. Without the supply for one or two weeks, the troopers stationed there will leave the islands on their own. Once they have left, they will never be able to come back."

The Philippine government has responded with what Prince calls the "Lumpia Strategy," named after the famous Filipino egg roll stuffed with vegetables (including cabbage) and sometimes meat. It aims to preserve Filipino sovereignty over the islands by maintaining possession and fishing rights.

Mayor Eugenio Bito-onon, whose territory includes Ayungin Island, tries to help the military re-supply the troops on the distant outpost, for which he and the marines have been honored with the Adelina Award, but Chinese interference is making such efforts more and more difficult. Only sustained support from the people and government can keep the garrison intact.

More information: <http://batangasvarsitarian.net>.

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