


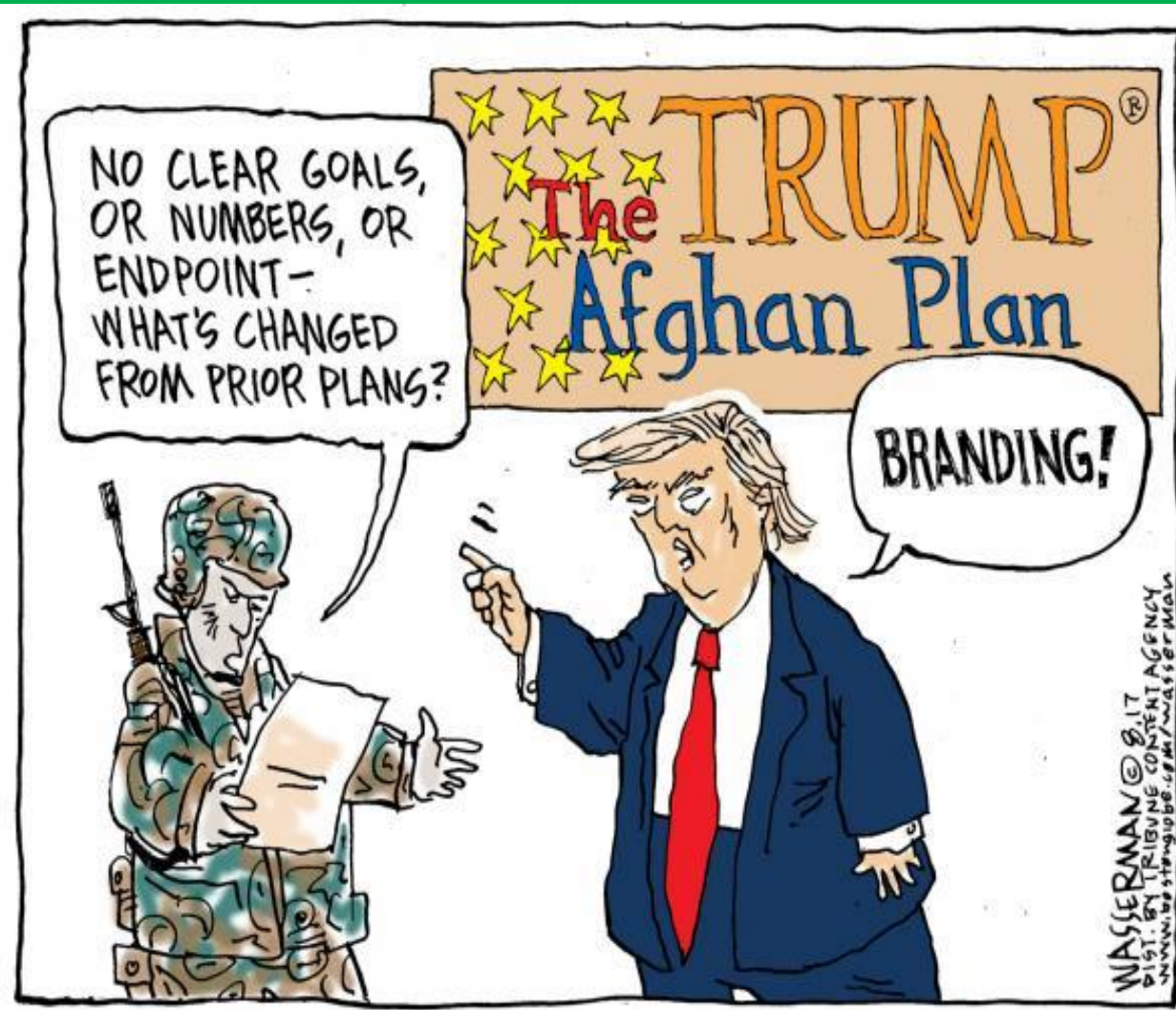
Reconfiguring a Philippine National Security Strategy that Will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Award: The Way Forward



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- “ Every system of law presupposes an initial political decision, whether explicit or implied, whether achieved by voting or bargaining or by force, as too the authority to make and unmake law... The ultimate authority of law derives from politics...”

• E.H. Carr,
1939

Introduction



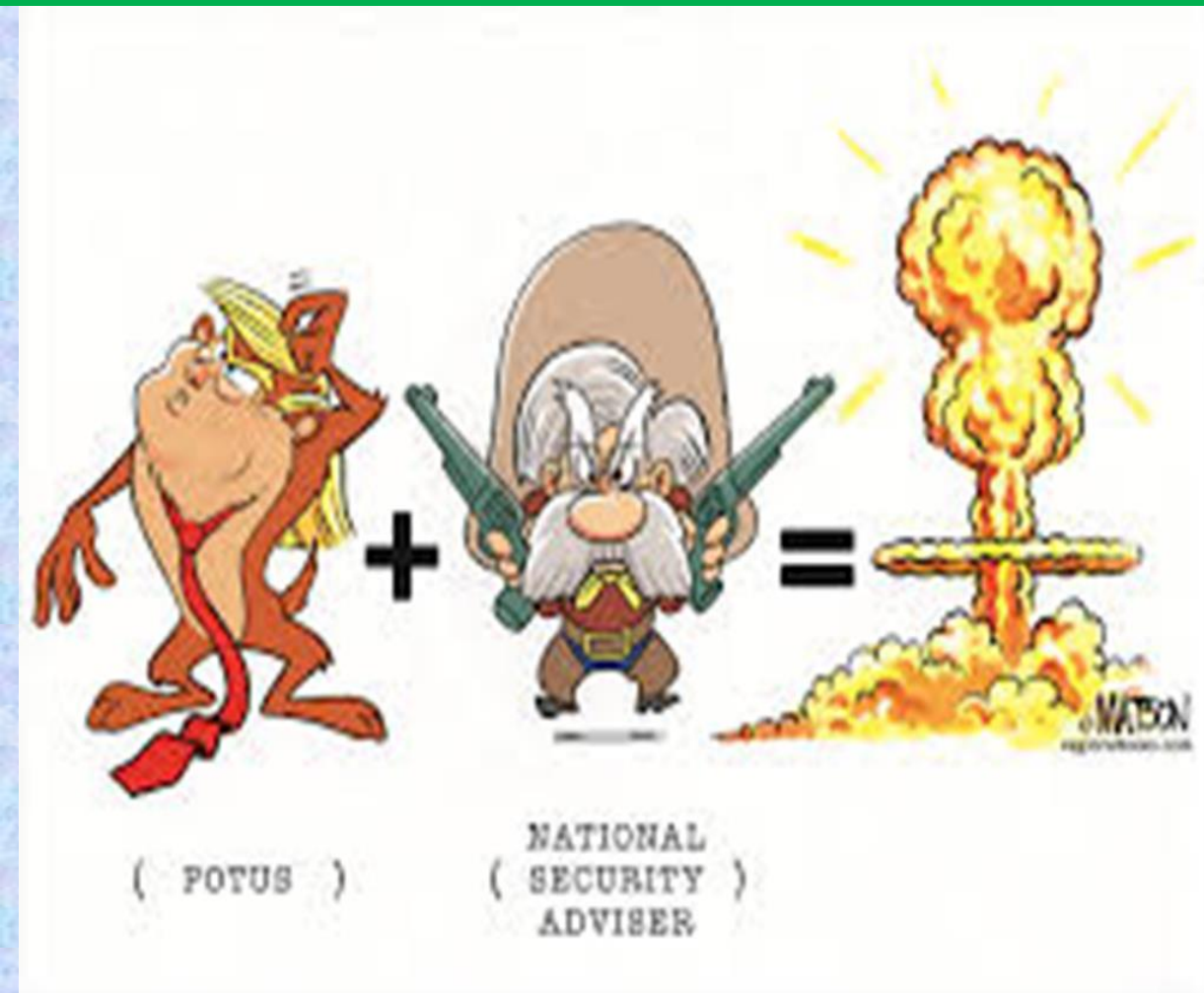
A National Security Strategy represents a nation's plan for the coordinated use of all the instruments of national power—from diplomacy to the military capability—to pursue the objectives that defend and advance the national interests.

Introduction

The term “strategy” in NSS is understood as a plan of action designed to achieve a future desirable state of affairs. Its Greek origin refers to the military domain—the office of general or generalship

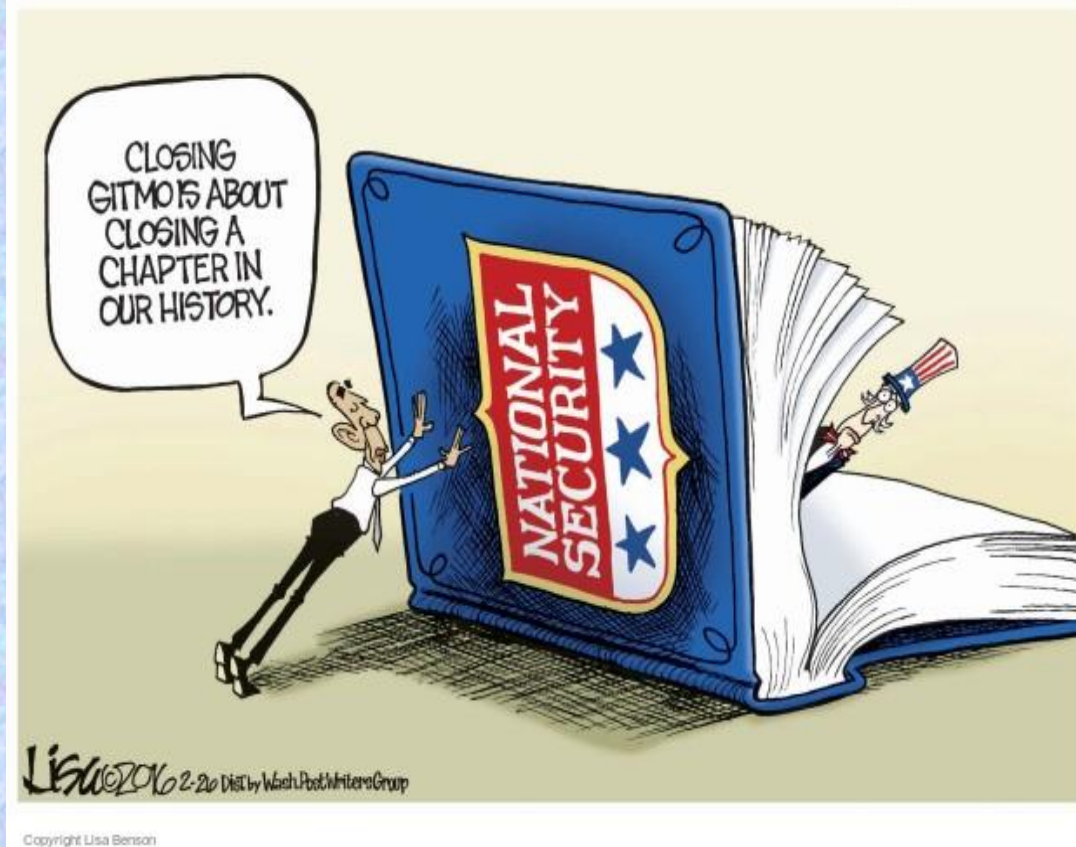


Introduction



Strategy encompasses the direction and scope of the course of actions designed to achieve certain desired results that results from overcoming various kinds of obstacles, and sometimes, to compete and eventually defeat an opponent.

Introduction



One of the key features of the NSS that provides value to subordinate policy and strategy makers is the inclusion in the document of the state's overall strategic vision or “Grand Strategy.”

Introduction

Grand Strategy is a conceptual framing that describes to a state, (whether it is a great power or not) how the world is, envisions how it ought to be, and specifies a set of policies that can achieve that ordering.



Introduction



- What should be the Philippines national security strategy that could enable it and other like-minded countries to uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling on the South China Sea?

The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China



The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China



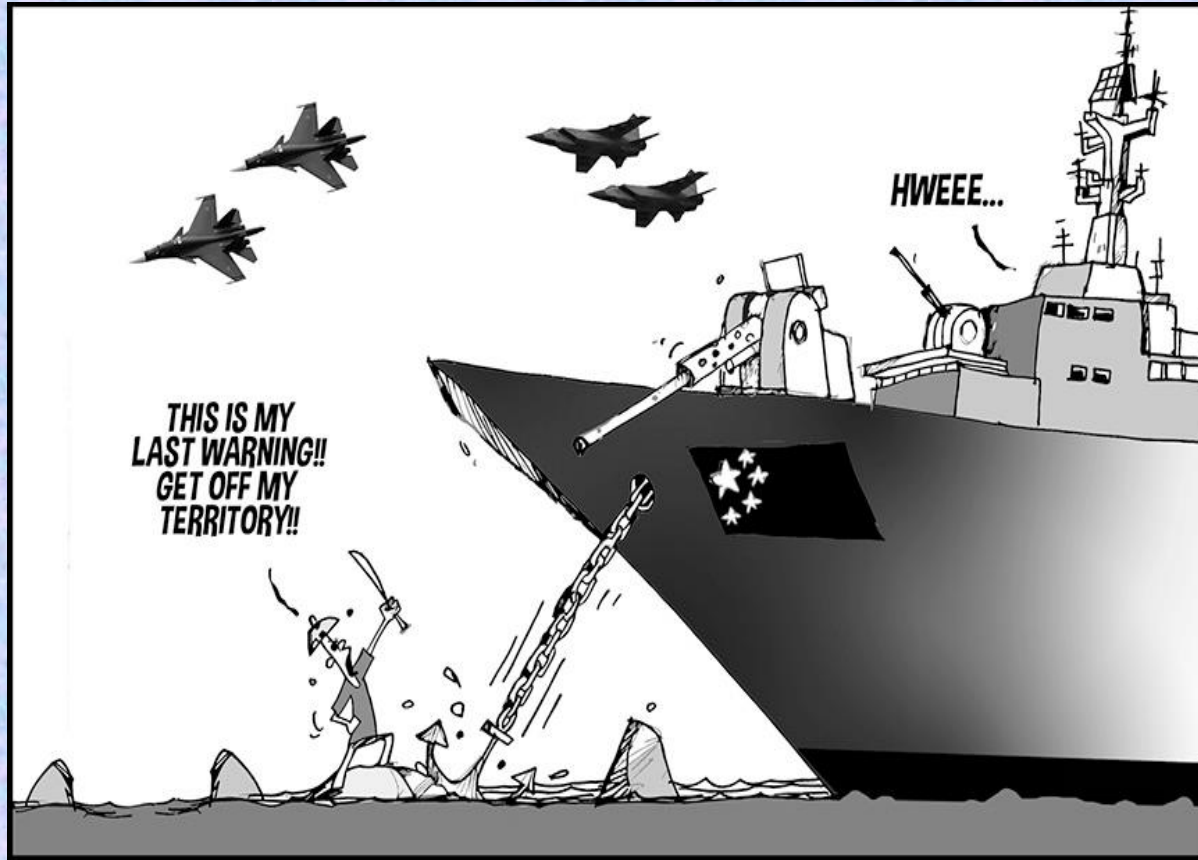
In January 2013, the Philippines directly confronted Chinese realpolitik approach in the South China Sea dispute by filing a statement of claim against China in the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague in the Netherlands.

The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China

By availing itself of the arbitration mechanism of the UNCLOS, the Philippines adopted international law as a “lawfare” or the use of law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve an operational objective.



The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China



More significantly President Aquino altered the pattern in Philippine foreign polic by challenging China's expansive maritime claim in the South China Sea.

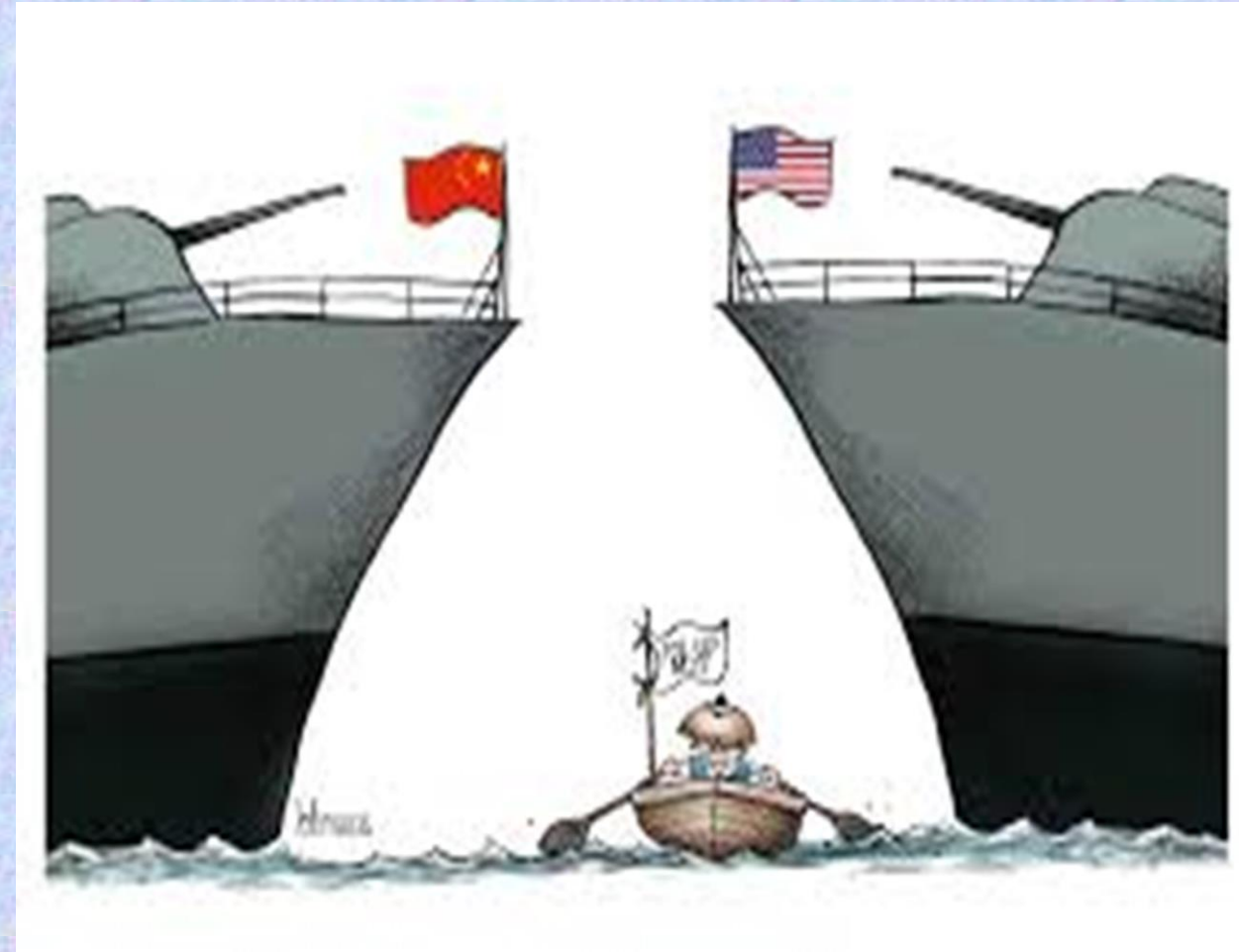
The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China

Since 1992, the three previous administrations (Ramos, Estrada, and Arroyo) had pursued routine and low-politics foreign policy agenda aimed at economic diplomacy and protecting the welfare and interests of OFWs all over the world.

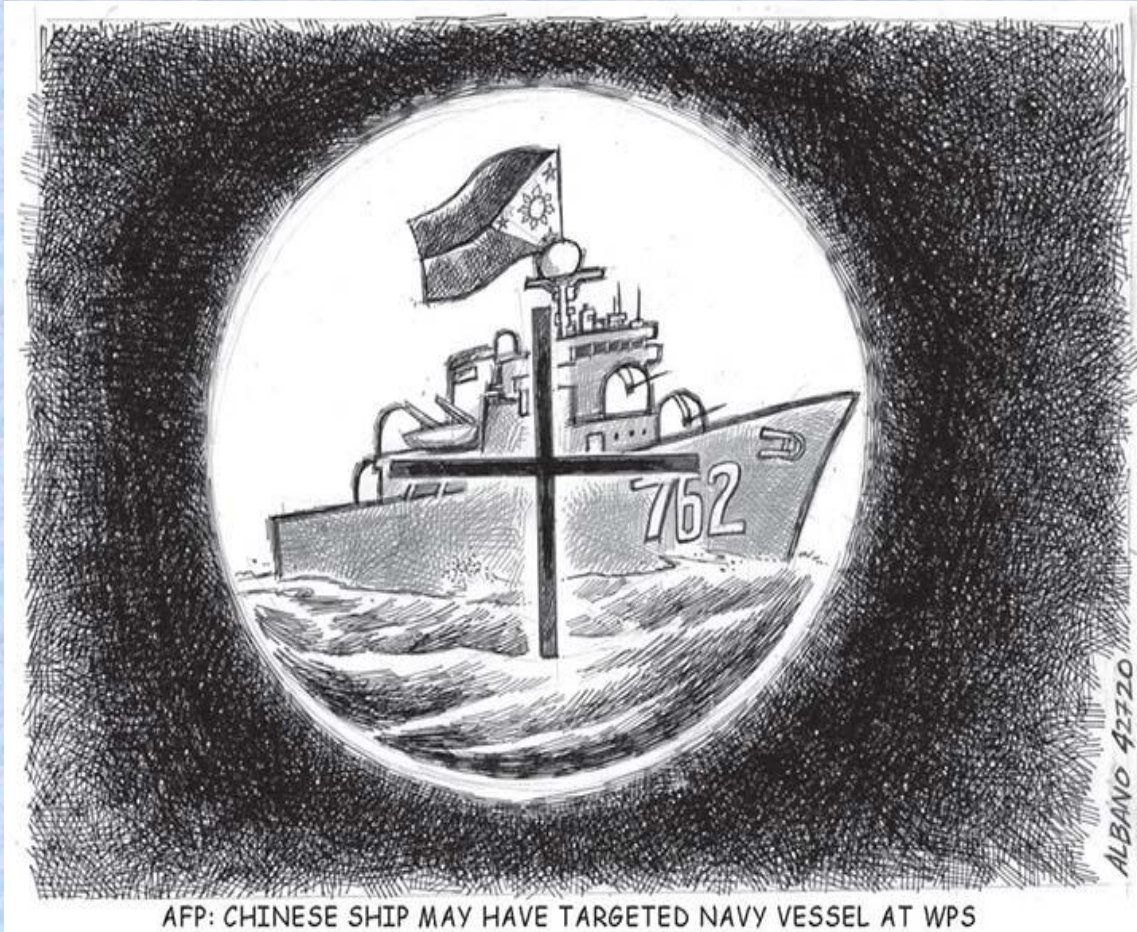


The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China

In effect, the Philippines got involved again in a traditional geo-political game among the great powers in East Asia.



The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China



President Aquino directed the AFP's shift to shift its attention and resources away from internal to maritime security.

The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China

On several occasions, he vowed to pursue the AFP modernization program, intended to transform the Philippine military from an army-centered counter-insurgency-oriented organization into a modern armed forces capable of overseeing territorial defense and maritime security.



The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China



Enhancing maritime domain awareness—
The establishment of the National Coast Watch System in September 2011 to monitor the country's vast maritime environment requires air-assets, trained personnel, and radars and the Philippine Air Force's PAF acquisition of a long-range patrol aircraft, lead-in-fighter jets and surface-attack aircraft addresses the need for maritime awareness and limited naval interdiction capability, particularly within the Philippine territorial waters to the 200-nautical mile EEZ; and

The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China

Joint operations between the PAF and PN for limited naval interdiction capabilities—Development of the PAF capabilities to will support the Philippine Navy's limited naval interdiction operations. The PAF's Air Defense System and the PN's Coast Watch System will provide coverage for and augment the over-the-horizon reconnaissance and targeting capabilities.



The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China



The PAF's maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft would serve as the primary platforms of patrols, surveillance, and interdiction, while the PN's surface combatants would conduct helicopter patrol and provide longer on-station time, visible and enhanced naval presence and deterrence.

The Aquino Administration's Strategy of Challenging China

Conscious of its limited military capabilities, the Philippines enhanced its security ties with the United States—the country's longtime strategic ally--and fostered a security partnership with Japan.



The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



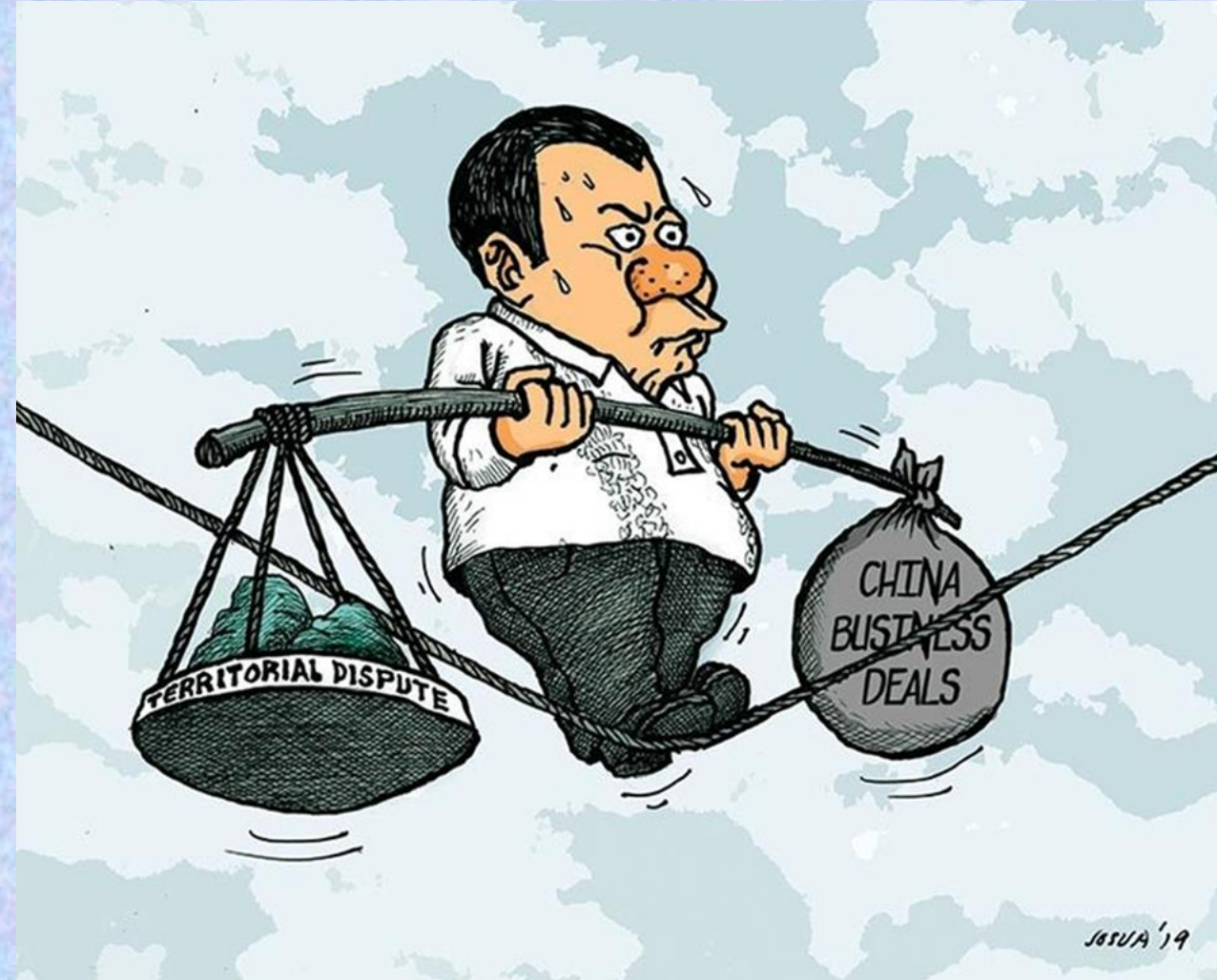
The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



On 22 December 2016, President Duterte declared that he is ready to set aside the 2016 Arbitral Ruling in the face of the reports that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has installed weapon systems in the seven artificial islands occupied by Chinese forces.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China

According to him, the changing nature of international politics in Southeast Asia convinced him to set aside the 2016 Arbitral Award to the Philippines.



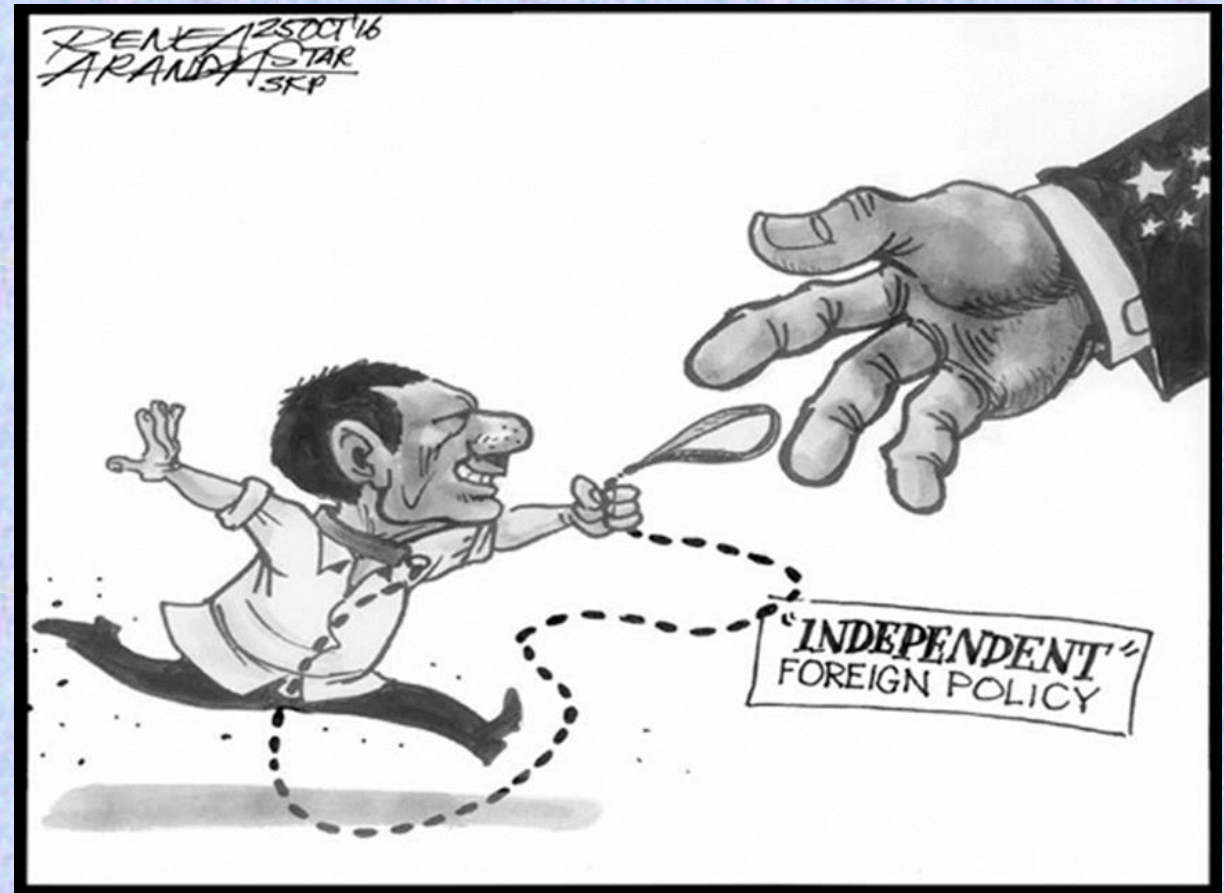
The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



President Duterte undid President Benigno Aquino's legacy of balancing China's expansive claim in the South China Sea.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China

His diplomatic strategy was aimed at appeasing China, in contrast to then President Aquino's confrontational stance vis-à-vis China.



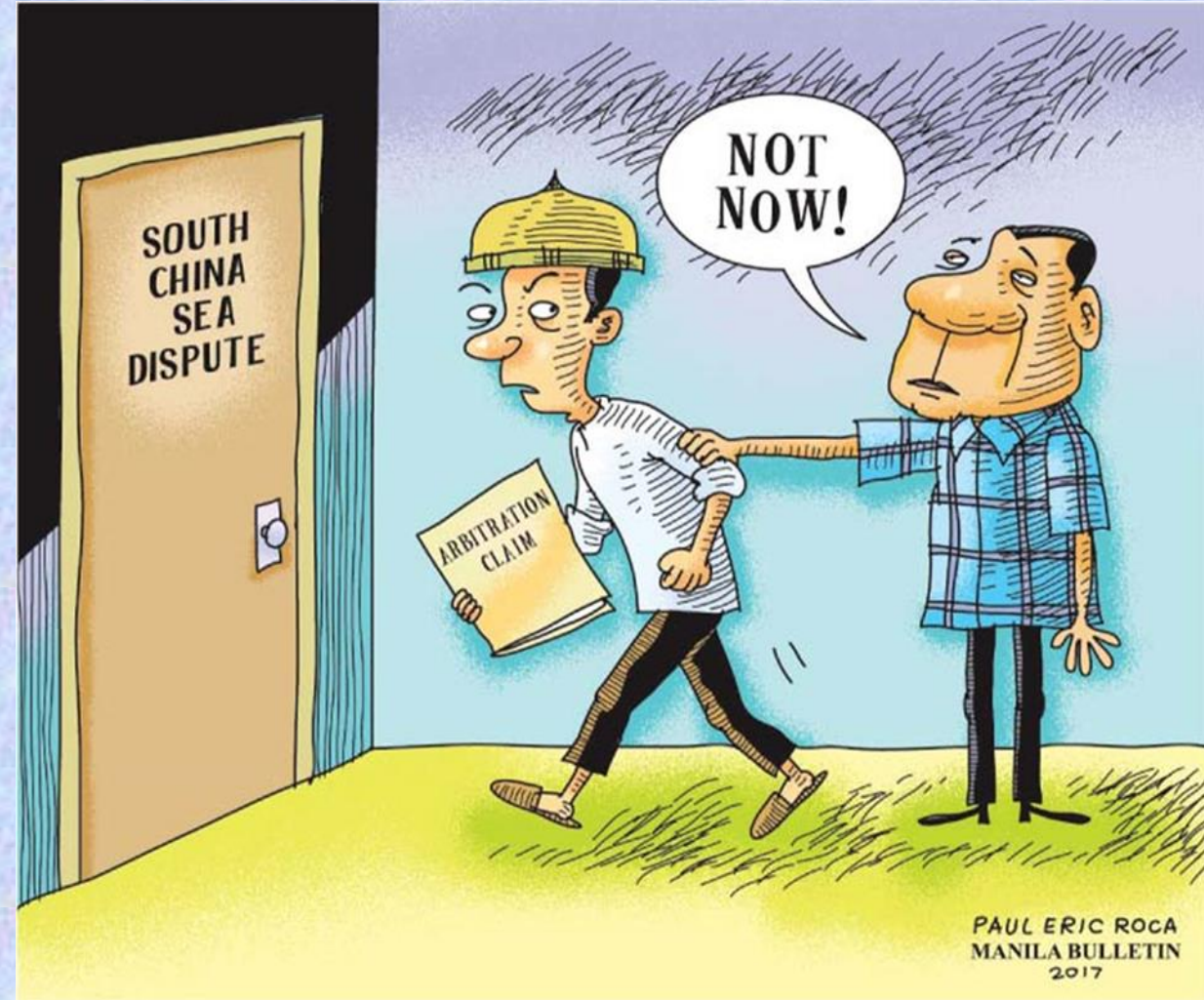
The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



His appease policy involved distancing the Philippines from its long-standing treaty ally, the U.S., and ingratiated the country to China, a regional power bent on reconfiguring the territorial landscape in East Asia.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China

Echoing China's mantra, President Duterte said that the tribunal award to the Philippines was purely a bilateral issue between the Philippines and China. It was an overwhelming legal triumph over China; however, the Duterte Administration acknowledged the eagerly anticipated decision with sober, cautious, and even muted reaction.



The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



During the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Laos, the late Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay withdrew the country's motion to incorporate the arbitral tribunal's decision in the ASEAN Joint Communique after Cambodia objected to its inclusion. The following year, President Duterte did not raise the arbitral rulings either during the 30th ASEAN summit on 27 April.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



More than five years into his term, President Duterte has not changed the Philippines' national security objectives of developing the PN and PAF.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China

He continues the Aquino Administration's previous administration's efforts to develop a credible defense posture and simply reoriented the AFP's key missions by returning the function of internal security back to the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police.



The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



The Philippine-U.S. alliance experienced a major crisis shortly after President Duterte became president in June 2016. He threatened to terminate the Philippines' long-standing alliance with U.S., reached out to China and Russia, and he explicitly declared that the U.S. would not honor its treaty commitments to the Philippines as provided by the 1951 MDT.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



PHILIPPINES SUSPENDS TERMINATION OF VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT

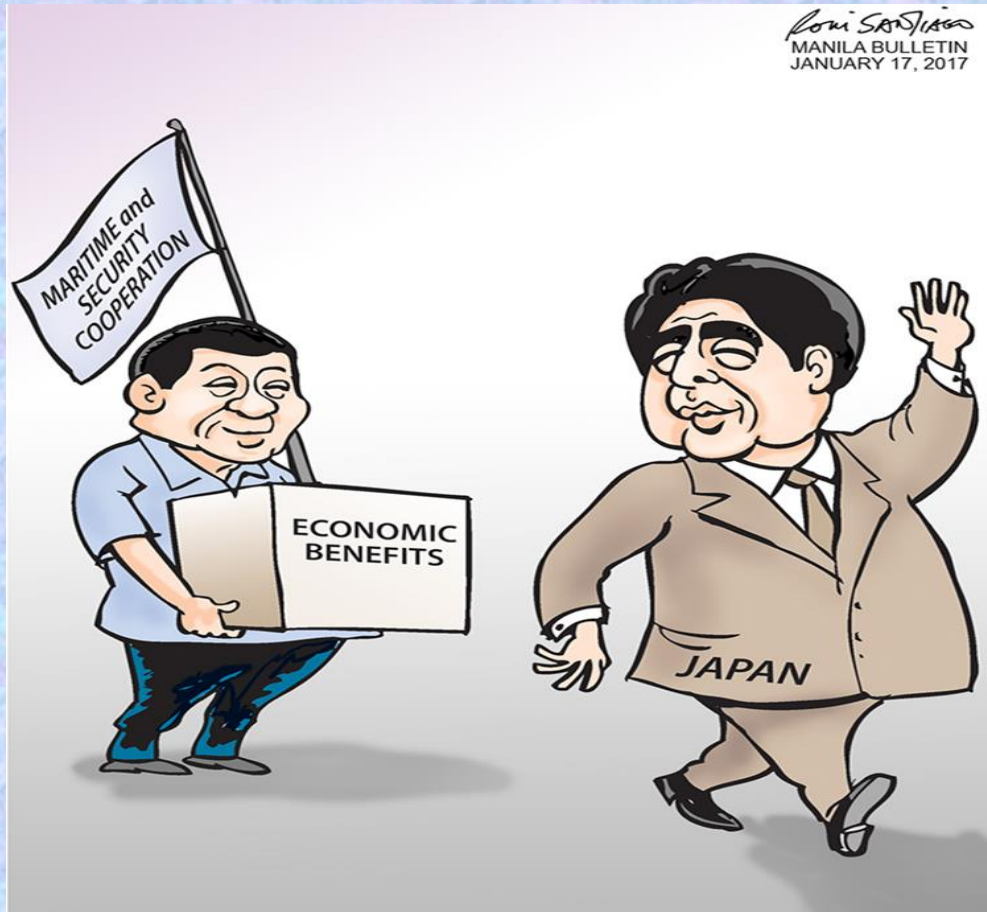
Since late 2016, the Philippine and the U.S. military establishments have effectively circumvented the crisis in the two countries' alliance steaming from the Duterte Administration's appeasement policy on China.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China

Despite the refocusing of the alliance agenda from external defense and maritime security to counter-terrorism and Humanitarian and Risk Reduction, the U.S. military succeeded in strengthening the pro-American elements in the Philippine government and the AFP and averted the crisis, and a possible break up of the alliance.



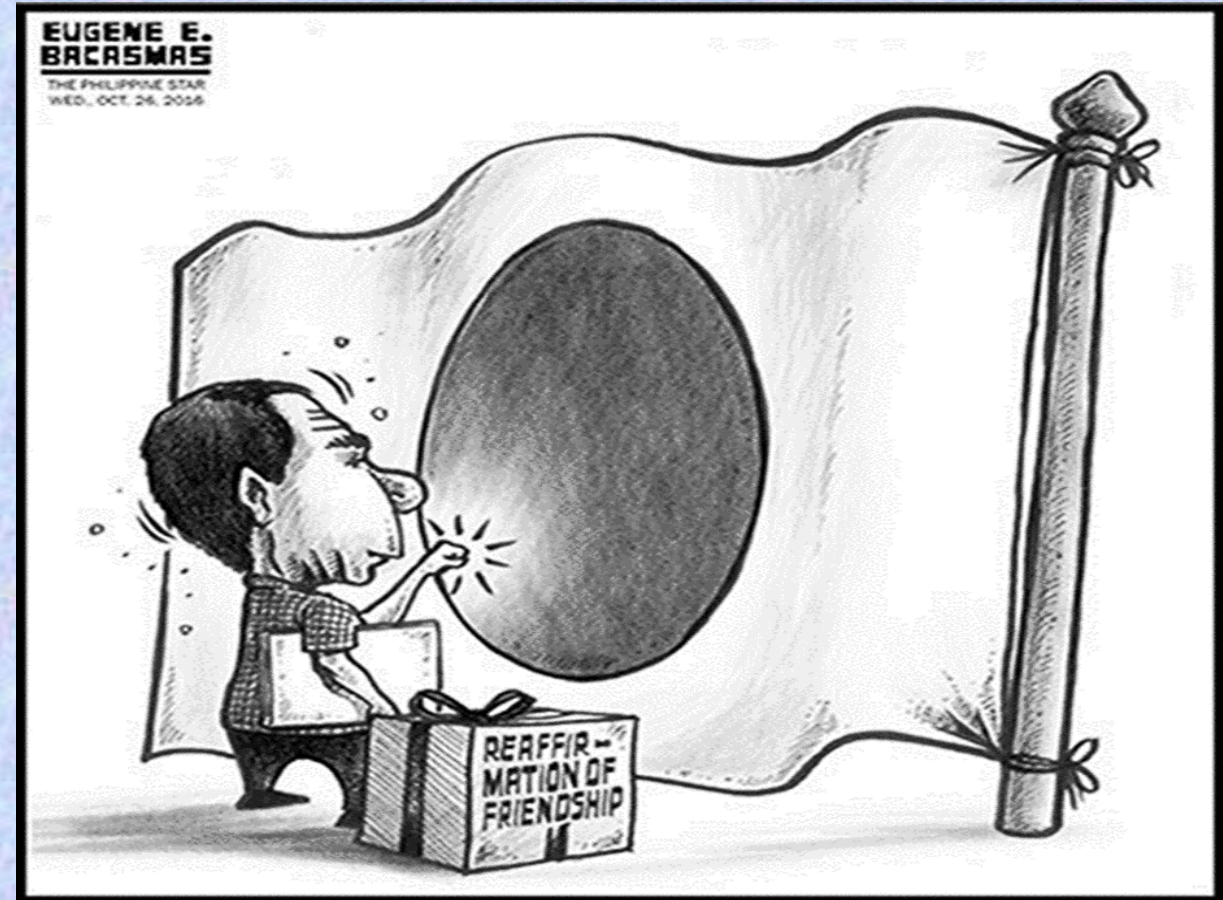
The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China



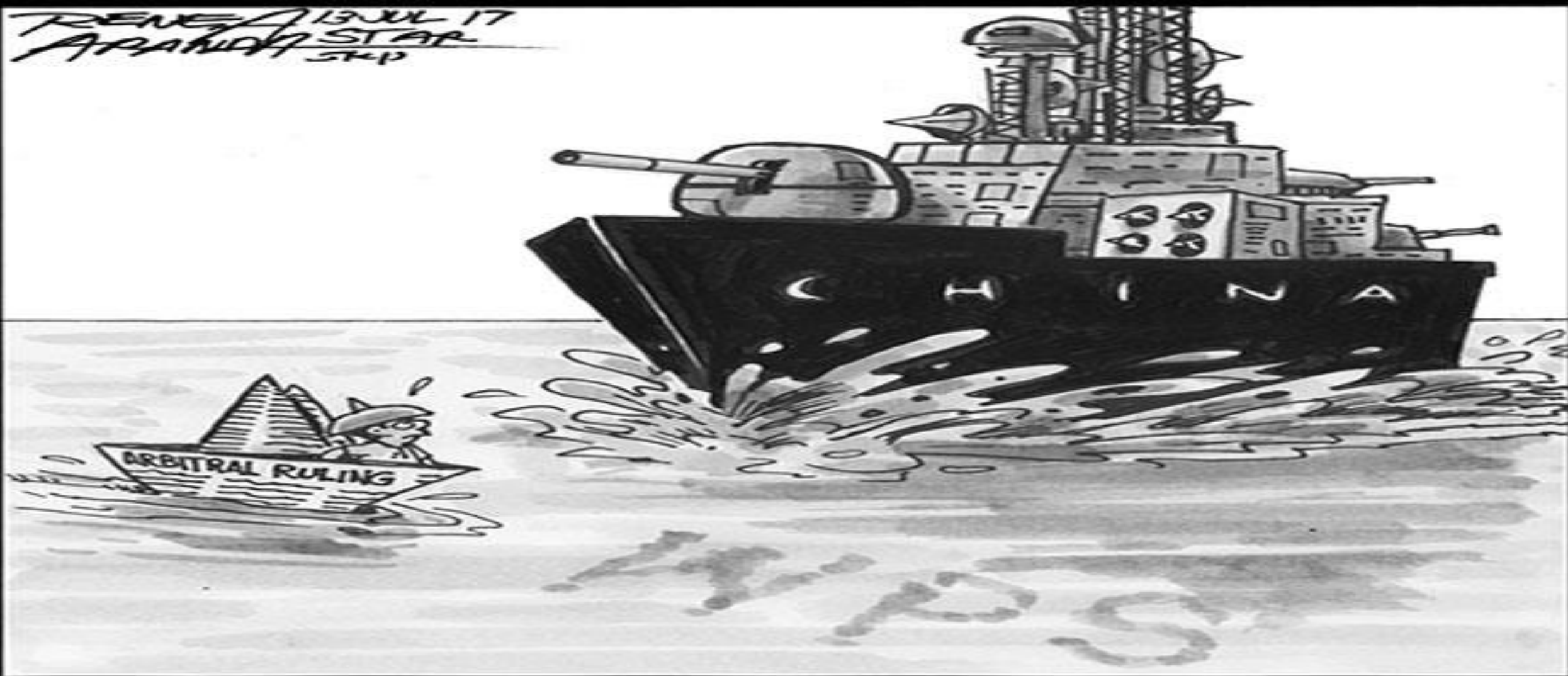
President Duterte has been very vocal against the Philippine-U.S. alliance. However, he has never criticized or even mentioned the Philippine-Japan security ties or Philippine-Australia security partnership.

The Duterte Administration's Strategy of Appeasing China

President Duterte's decisions to bolster Philippine-Japan security partnership, and stabilize Philippine-Australia bilateral relations, suggest that, despite his efforts to improve Philippine-China economic relations, he sees the need to foster security partnerships with two middle powers.



Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling



Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling

In June 2019, President Duterte greenlighted to bankroll the second phase of the AFP's 15-year modernization program. This phase provides big-ticket AFP purchases the lion's share of the US\$ 56 billion fund going to the PN and the PAF. Will the next president continue to fund this program?



Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling



In February 2020, President Duterte abruptly abrogated the 1999 Philippine-U.S. Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), and triggered a major crisis in the alliance. Considering President Duterte's antipathy to the alliance and his few remaining months in office, a renegotiated VFA will be tackled in all probability by a new administration in the Philippines.

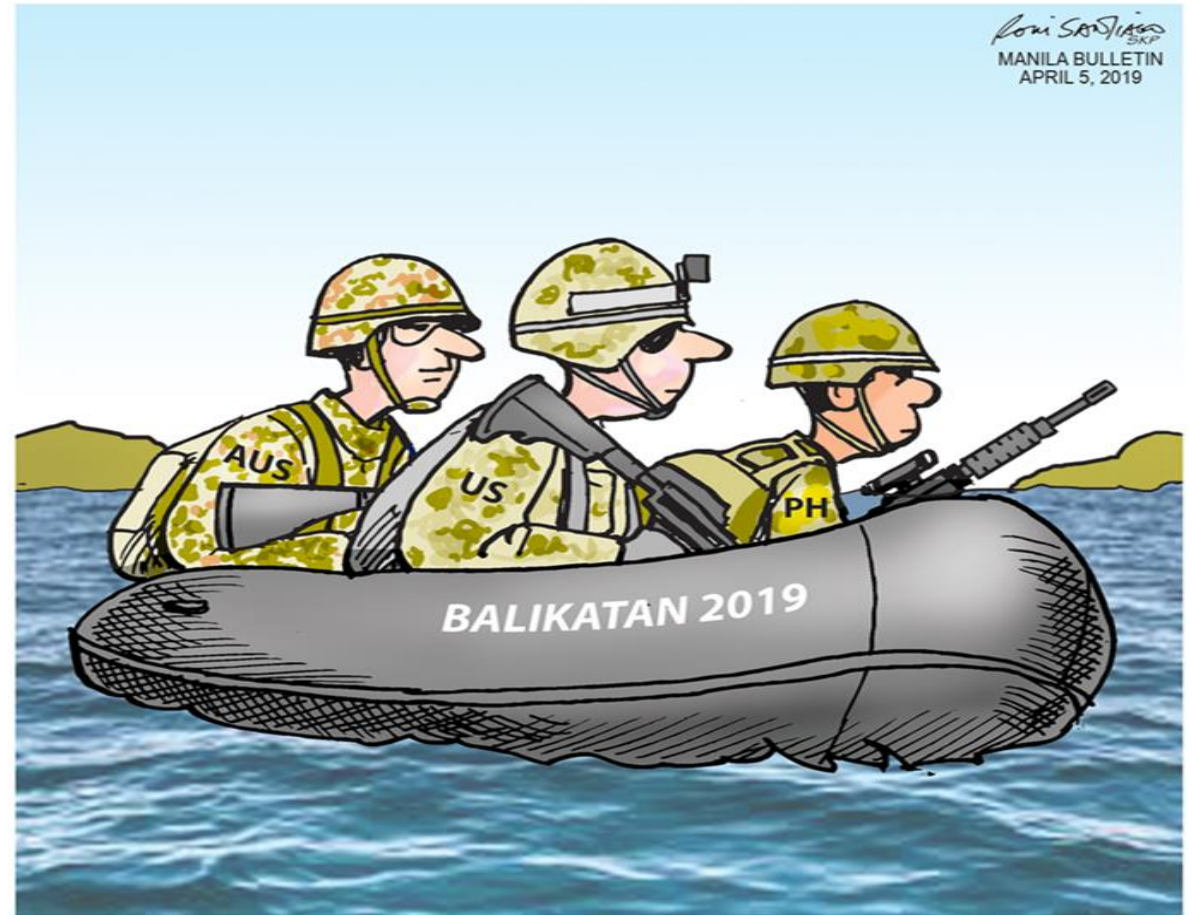
Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling

Hopefully, the incoming president will reinvigorate the alliance in ways that the Philippines will again become a more integral component of U.S. defense strategy in the Indo-Pacific region.



Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling

The Duterte Administration strengthened the security partnerships with two middle powers, Japan and Australia, to enable the Philippines to effectively play its classic diplomatic gambit of equi-balancing or the art of pitting one great power against the other. Will the next administration continue this policy?



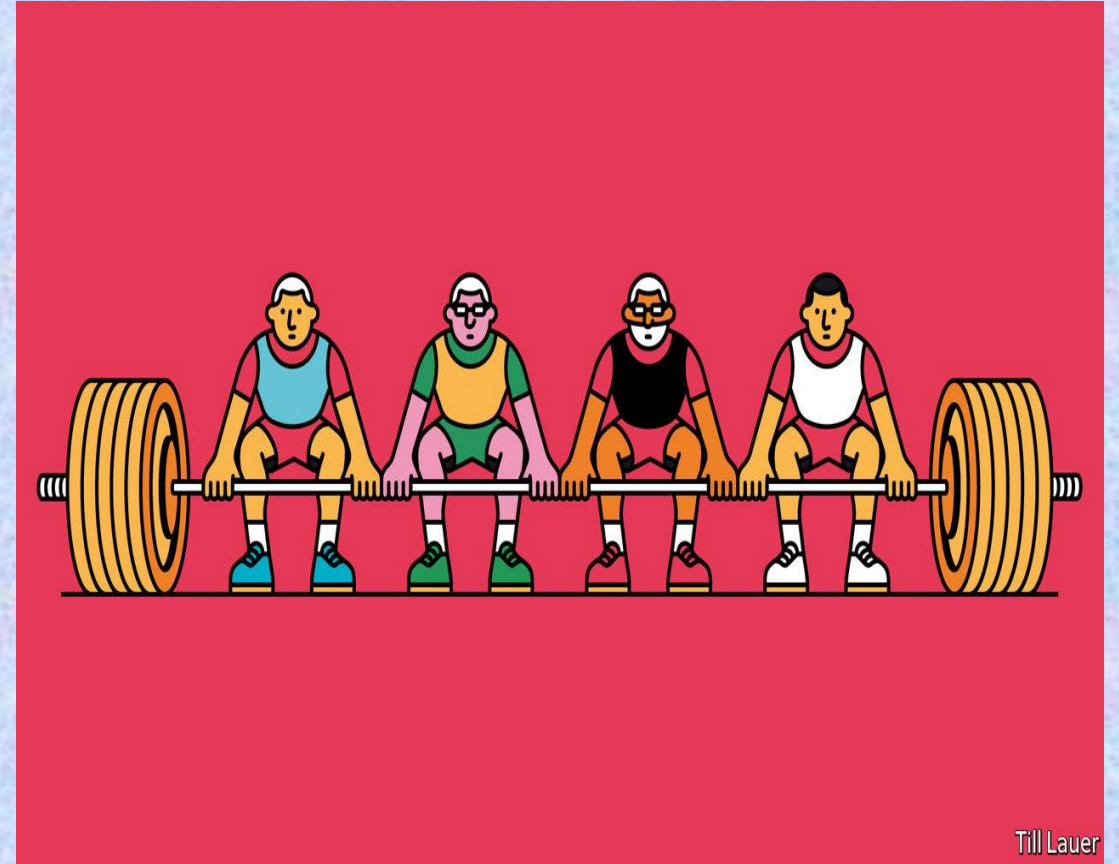
Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling



The QUAD is a multilateral forum where four major liberal democracies with substantial maritime capabilities shared concerns about China's growing capabilities and assertiveness.

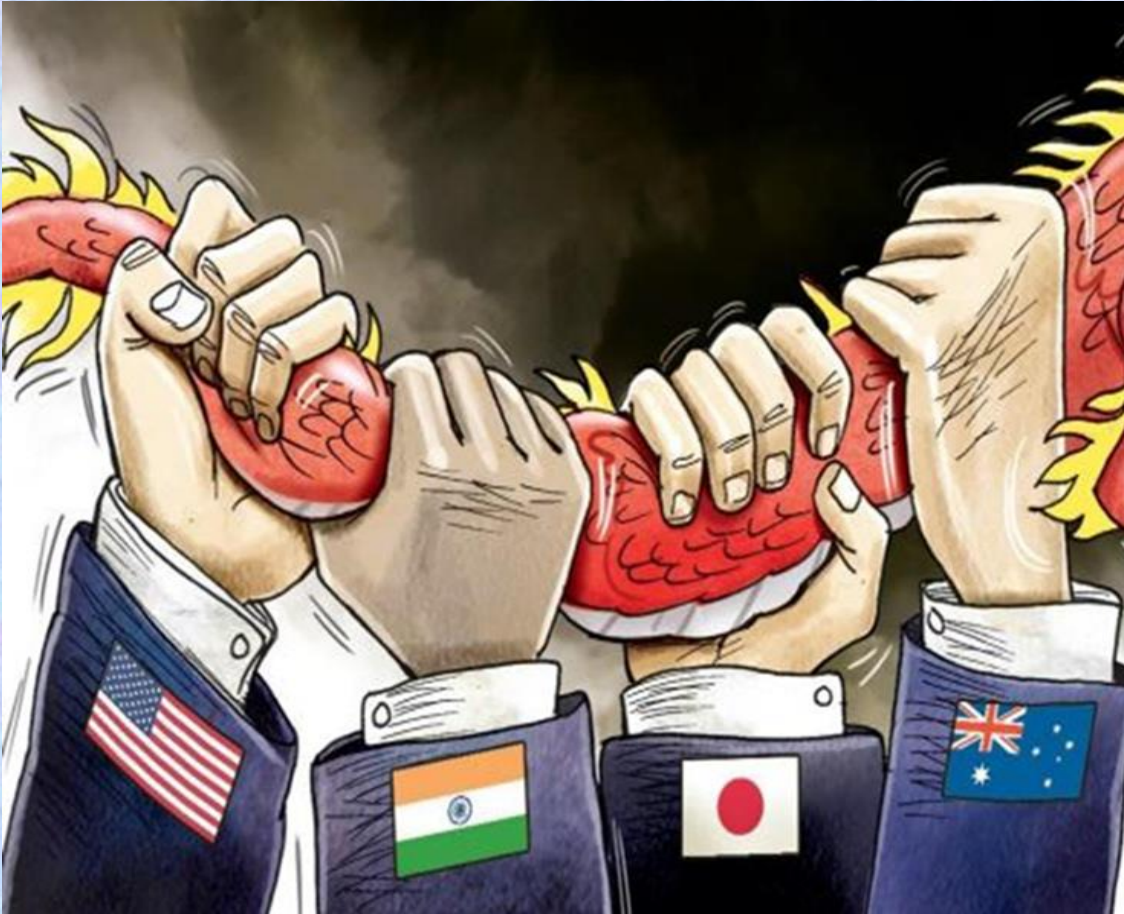
Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling

The QUAD is described as a symbolically and substantially important institutional addition to an existing network of alliances, strategic and defense cooperation among four militarily capable liberal democracies of the Indo-Pacific.



Till Lauer

Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling



How should the Philippines view and interact with the QUAD in given that its members have the common concern (China), the political, and economic will, and more significantly, the military capabilities to confront various forms of Chinese coercion and ensure that the vital waters ways of the Indo-Pacific remains free and open.

Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling



There are current two clashing views between the Duterte Administration and the defense/military establishment which is placing the Philippines in a difficult dilemma of dealing with China's maritime expansion in the South China Sea. How will the next president address this internal divide the Philippine government?

Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling

After five years of implementing a policy of appeasement toward China, the country is considering a policy of “limited hard balancing” to constrain China’s expansionist agenda.



Reconfiguring a National Security Strategy that will Uphold the July 12, 2016 Arbitral Ruling

Specifically, this strategy requires building up the Philippine military's external defense capabilities, maintaining its alliance with the U.S., and making security arrangements with other middle powers like South Korea, and Australia and even with the QUAD. Will the next president adopt this emerging strategy?





**Adoption of this
strategy will enable
the next Philippine
administration to
uphold the 2016
Arbitral Ruling on the
South China Sea.**



Thank you
very much
for your
attention!

