Managing Philippines v. China: The Role of the Agent

Florin T. Hilbay

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The *Philippines v. China* Arbitration ushered a number of people into the limelight of what turned out to be a major development in international law. The Author was one such person. He was appointed Solicitor General when the case was in its development stage, and managed the same until the Arbitral Tribunal ruled favorably for the Philippines.

As the Solicitor General who oversaw majority of the case, the Author gives a personal account of his role primarily as an unwilling agent who sought to achieve an efficient win, while reducing the impact of potential losses and also protecting former President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III in the course of the proceedings. The Author also talks about his experiences as he, an agent, effectively became the "team manager" of the Philippine legal team that argued the case before the Tribunal.

Likewise, the Author shares specific noteworthy issues concerning the case, and provides a peek into some of the events that transpired in the background regarding those issues. He also expounds on the traditional fishing rights of Filipinos at Scarborough Shoal, while discussing some developments that occurred while the case was pending with the Tribunal, such as the island-building activities of China in the South China Sea, as well as its reception locally among his ranks. The Author also recounts how the Philippine legal team strategically formulated the arguments with regard to Spratly Islands and Joint Development.

In sum, the Author provides a unique perspective into a number of factors that contributed to the landmark triumph of the Philippines — something that not too many people can share. By using a multidisciplinary approach to managing the internal operations of the case, the Author accounts how his initial unwilling agency translated into something more significant.