

## World leaders react to South China Sea ruling

(philstar.com) | Updated July 13, 2016 - 12:35am



Woody Island in the Paracel Island chain. **Google Earth**

MANILA, Philippines — The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled in favor of the Philippines on Tuesday disputing China's nine-dash line claim on virtually the entire South China Sea.

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World leaders shared their thoughts on the historic decision.

### Philippines

Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. called for "restraint and sobriety" immediately after the international arbitration court's ruling.

He said the Philippines welcomes the ruling but said the 501-page award. Meanwhile, Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said that Solicitor General Jose Calida would provide President Rodrigo Duterte with a synopsis of the ruling on Wednesday morning.

### Vietnam

Vietnam as one of the South China Sea claimant countries has been watching the Philippines's case against China with interest. Soon after the ruling was released, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Le Hai Binh said Vietnam [strongly supports the settlement of disputes by peaceful means](#).

It also reaffirmed its sovereignty over Paracel Islands (also claimed by China) and Spratly Islands (also claimed by China, Brunei, Taiwan, Malaysia and the Philippines), which it said is established in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

## United States

The United States said it is still studying the tribunal's decision in the Philippines-China arbitration and made no comments yet on the merits of the case.

However, it reiterated its support for efforts to resolve the dispute through peaceful means, including through arbitration.

Washington expressed hope that China and the Philippines would comply with the decision and urged all claimants to avoid provocative statements or actions.

"We encourage claimants to clarify their maritime claims in accordance with international law — as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention — and to work together to manage and resolve their disputes," a statement from John Kirby, assistant secretary and department spokesperson of the Bureau of Public Affairs said.

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## Australia

Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop, similarly, called on the Philippines and China to abide by the ruling, which is final and binding on both parties, and to refrain from coercive behavior.

Bishop clarified the nature of the tribunal's decision which ruled on maritime rights under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and not sovereignty.

She said the decision is an "important test case for how the region can manage disputes peacefully."

"Australia supports the right of all countries to seek to resolve disputes peacefully in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS," she said, adding that adherence to international law is the foundation for peace, stability and prosperity in East Asia.

## New Zealand

Foreign Minister Murray McCully called on parties to respect the ruling on maritime rights in the South China Sea.

He said maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea is vital to the ongoing prosperity of the wider Asia-Pacific region.

"We hope that the Tribunal's ruling can provide a platform for resolving the longstanding and complex issues in the South China Sea and we urge all parties to work towards this end," McCully said.

## Japan

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida reiterated Tokyo's consistent advocacy to the "importance of the rule of law and the use of peaceful means, not the use of force or coercion, in seeking settlement of maritime disputes."

Kishida also called on the parties to comply with the award.

## India

India's Ministry of External Affairs said that as a state party to the UNCLOS, it urges all signatory countries to respect the international treaty which is also referred to as the "constitution of the sea."

It said states should resolve disputes peacefully and "exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that could complicate or escalate disputes affecting peace and stability."

"Sea lanes of communication passing through the South China Sea are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development," the ministry said in a statement. — **Levi A. So**