



This map shows what the boundary is likely to look like according to the application of international law - courtesy of Timor-Leste's [Maritime Boundary Office](#)

News 10 August 2016

Reputational Damage

It has been an interesting couple of weeks!

The award handed down regarding the South China Sea, the noble expression of the Australian Government's support for international law, public scrutiny of the inconsistency of these statements with its position on Timor and the first procedural meeting of the Conciliation Commission.

You might like to read a blog post about Australia, the South China Sea and the Timor Sea we have here on TIMFO called "[Do as I say, not as I do.](#)"

And there are also interesting days ahead, particularly with the first meeting of the Compulsory Conciliation Commission where they 'get down to business.' This, according to the [press release](#) issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, is to begin on the 29th of August and is when "the Parties will address the background

to the conciliation and certain questions concerning the competence of the Commission."

I take this to mean the moment when Australia tries to wriggle out of this Conciliation process by challenging the 'competence' of the commission.

If that is in fact what the Australian team is going to attempt then the Turnbull Government should hang its head in shame. The procedure is there under UNCLOS to assist when there is an impasse. Timor-Leste could not have brought these proceedings unless Australia had knocked out the independent umpire and refused to engage on the issue.

If we try to wriggle out of this it would fly in the face of the Government's public comments about the value of UNCLOS to resolve disputes.

We would suffer reputational damage as a good international citizen and diminish our ability to speak with credibility on international law and the South China Sea.

Sister Susan



Sister Susan Connelly