

## ***JGL Eye Column***

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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C HICAGO (*jGLi*) – During the Imperial days of China's dynasties, monogamous marriage between a man and a woman had been the rule rather than exception. This exception is observed by the rich in Chinese society, who contract arranged marriage with a wife with an elaborate formal ceremony and concubines with lesser ceremony. Among those, who had a wife and concubines was the late revolutionary leader Mao Tse-tung, who was against forced marriage.

When China unilaterally pulled a stunt recently, embossing on their passports the Philippine Western or South China Sea as part of its territory when nobody was looking, it was like declaring marriage to woman even without the woman's knowledge. This is not only akin to a forced marriage detested by its former rulers but is also a self-marriage practiced by weirdos.

When the Philippines and other ASEAN countries insist on taking their claim on Philippine Western Sea to a multilateral, if not international, forums, it is a diplomatic jargon in saying that the bilateral or one-on-one approach promoted by China to arrive at a resolution to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) will not work.

The Philippines or Vietnam are like fly weight boxers facing heavyweight boxers in facing China if they are going to agree to a one-on-one negotiation. They are like houseflies being whacked by a sledgehammer. Why will they agree to a one-sided deal they are sure to lose?

When the *China Daily* criticized President Aquino for reasserting his stand to take the Philippine Western Sea issue to include other countries in discussions during the recent Cambodia summit,

Mr. Aquino was just exercising his freedom of expression, a human right guaranteed by the United Nations.

Mr. Aquino should be congratulated, not rebuked, for speaking up, when he disagreed with his host, Hun Sen, the Prime Minister of this year's ASEAN

Written by  
Monday, 03 December 2012 15:41 -

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Chair Cambodia, who announced that the ASEAN had reached a consensus not to internationalize the West Philippine Sea dispute.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand to promote political and economic cooperation and regional stability. So, the Philippines is just exercising its right provided by ASEAN to resolve issues thru regional cooperation when bilateral collaboration will be very divisive as in the case of Philippine Western Sea.

## **TELL IT TO THE MARINES**

The editorial said, "Aquino's undiplomatic move was ill-advised, and will not help solve the issue in peace. A rude Manila helps no one." Tell it to the Marines.

When other countries, like the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam, protested the supposed "consensus," saying there was no such agreement, why single out Aquino as "rude"?

The invitation of the Philippines to fellow claimant countries Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam for four-way talks on the maritime dispute next month should be welcomed by China so these countries will be given an opportunity to substantiate their claims to

the dispute.

These talks are more laudable than China's subversive and deceptive effort to pull the rug from the feet of these claimant countries by unilaterally resolving the dispute in its favor by printing the Philippine Western Sea map on their passport without any basis.

They rank over China's bullying tactics of announcing the successful landing of a fighter jet on its aircraft carrier to intimidate its neighbors, like the Philippines, which among others, is protesting the presence of three Chinese ships in the Panatag Shoal, site of a standoff between Chinese and Philippine naval ships last summer. The shoal is roughly 125 nautical miles from the nearest Philippine shore in Zambales while it is 472 nautical miles far away from China's nearest coastal province of Hainan.

The Philippines maintains that the Panatag Shoal and Spratly Islands are within 200 nautical miles of its EEZ (exclusive economic zone) that under UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) should be respected by signatory countries, like the Philippines and China

What the Philippines lacks in its defense capabilities, it should make up by expanding its mass media capabilities.

For instance, the Philippines should review its agreement with Xinhua News Agency, the official news agency of China, which is feeding information to the Philippine News Agency, the Philippine government's official news agency.

The PNA should be very careful in carrying Xinhua's unverified news stories that could be propping up China's propaganda machine that could condition the minds of the people and could hurt the interest of the Philippines  
. It's like someone picking up a stone and using it to crack his own head.

Since PNA is carrying Xinhua's stories, which, in turn, are carried by Philippine media outlets, PNA should also demand an audit of its stories from Xinhua that Xinhua clients should also carry PNA stories.

PNA will have to employ Chinese interpreters, who can tell if its stories are faithfully translated into Chinese characters.

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If Xinhua's clients are not carrying PNA stories, PNA should review, if not rescind its contract with Xinhua, because such contract calls for reciprocal obligation or mutual action.

A truthfully informed Filipino public, who can rally the world opinion to its cause, is empowering. It is an effective ally of the Philippine government to neutralize a bullying and aggressive giant neighbor. # # #

Watch out for the upcoming media-outlet oriented, subscription-based website of *Journal Group Link International* that guarantees originally sourced stories, features, photos, audios and videos and multi-media contents.)

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