

The Unravelling of the Existing International Order

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The world is at a critical crossroads today. In the UN General Assembly, the United States has just voted with Russia, Belarus and North Korea in refusing to condemn Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine. For the first time in memory, the US has sided with the aggressor state against the victim of aggression.

Russia and China's long-term effort to overturn the existing fundamental international law, embodied in the 1945 UN Charter, outlawing the use or threat of force to settle disputes between states, has received a massive boost from the US, the erstwhile leader of the free world championing the existing international order.

The coastal states bordering the South China Sea are forewarned that China will now be emboldened to act more aggressively in making the ten-dash line its international boundary in the South China Sea. If China succeeds in making the ten-dash line a reality, the Philippines will lose at least 80 percent of its maritime zones and all its island territories in the West Philippine. Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei will suffer similar fates.

The three states with the most number of nuclear weapons - Russia, the US and China - are now on the same side, claiming as their own, territories and maritime zones that clearly belong to other states: Russia is claiming huge areas of Ukraine in the Donbass, China is claiming the islands, waters and resources of almost the entire South China Sea, as well as territories of India in Arunachal Pradesh and other areas, and the US is surprisingly claiming the Panama Canal, Greenland and the Gaza strip.

This means that the Philippines must prepare for the worst in the South China Sea. The Philippines must strengthen its alliances with other like minded-states: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the European

Union and other states threatened by this impending unravelling of the existing international order.

Members of our Congress must stop gutting the budget for the AFP Modernization to unconscionably increase their own pork barrel. In fact, members of Congress must forego their humongous annual pork barrel for the next 25 years if the Philippines has to modernize its armed forces to defend the West Philippine Sea.

As I said, the world is at a critical crossroads today: the existing international order is changing for the worse, alliances are shifting or even breaking down. The Philippines must prepare for the worst by rapidly strengthening its self-defense capability at all cost while hoping for the best. Preserving the integrity of our national territory demands no less.

Thank you and a good day to everyone.