

# Ceremonial Turnover and Presentation of the 1875 Carta General del Archipiélago Filipino

March 19, 2026 – National Library of the Philippines

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## [INTRODUCTION]

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to the ceremonial turnover and presentation of the **1875 Carta General del Archipiélago Filipino**.

We are honored to have with us today here at the Epifanio de los Santos Auditorium of the National Library of the Philippines.

This event also serves as an expression of our deep gratitude for the generosity of former Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice, the Honorable **Antonio T. Carpio**, whose invaluable contributions have greatly enriched the cartographic collections of the National Library.

This meaningful partnership began with the donation of the map of the Philippines attached to the **1898 Treaty of Paris**, generously given by Justice Carpio and his wife, the Honorable **Ruth N. Carpio**, on October 25, 2024.

Subsequently, on December 11, 2025, the National Library formally accepted Part I of the **1808 Carta General del Archipiélago Filipino** from Justice Carpio.

This remarkable map, now housed at the Library's permanent gallery, stands as a vital historical artifact that deepens our understanding of the Philippines' territorial and cultural heritage.

Today's ceremonial turnover marks yet another significant addition to this growing collection, further strengthening the NLP's commitment to preserving and promoting the nation's documentary heritage for present and future generations.

This initiative also reflects Justice Carpio's advocacy in donating historical maps to institutions nationwide, aiming to deepen public awareness of the historical and legal foundations that safeguard our national territory and foster informed citizens.

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## [WELCOME REMARKS]

**Director Cesar Gilbert Q. Adriano**

Thank you and good afternoon.

Today, we gather not just for a formal property exchange but for a profound act of cultural homecoming.

It is my honor to welcome you to the National Library of the Philippines for the ceremonial turnover of the **1875 *Carta General del Archipiélago Filipino***, a silent yet soaring witness to our nation's geographic soul.

History comes alive through stories, but maps give them a place to stand.

This 1875 chart transcends Spanish hydrography. It is a definitive blueprint of the Philippine archipelago, capturing our island silhouette long before modern borders.

Its intricate lines unified our ancestors' diverse lands into a cohesive vision of nationhood, serving as a historical title deed to the very seas that define us.

We are particularly privileged to have former Senior Associate Justice **Antonio T. Carpio** with us today to lead our discussion.

His presence elevates the ceremony from an archival presentation into a vital affirmation of our heritage.

Acquiring this map is a victory for our collective memory.

Beyond storing books, we safeguard the Filipino spirit.

Now a public treasure in our permanent collection, it will fuel historians, inspire students, and guide researchers exploring our maritime integrity.

In a digital age, its tangible presence grounds us in deep, documented roots that no modern dispute can erase.

To Justice Carpio, entrusting this masterpiece to us testifies to your commitment to the Filipino people.

On behalf of the National Library of the Philippines, we accept this charge with gravity.

As we unveil it today, remember: a map shows not just where we are, but the journey to get here—and the vigilance required to stay.

Thank you.

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## [SPECIAL PRESENTATION – JUSTICE CARPIO]

**Hon. Antonio T. Carpio**

Pleasant afternoon to everyone.

I wish to thank the National Library, headed by Director Adriano, for hosting this event.

I'd like to explain a little bit about the **1875 *Carta General del Archipiélago Filipino***.

This map is the most complete and detailed map of Philippine territory during the Spanish regime.

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### On the Creation of the Map

There was a Spanish naval officer, **Captain Claudio Montero**, who was appointed as the first head of the Philippine Hydrographic Commission during the Spanish period.

He had two ships that went around the Philippines conducting depth soundings and coastal surveys.

From these, he produced this map—the most detailed and complete map of Philippine territory at that time.

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## On Bajo de Masinloc (Panacot / Scarborough Shoal)

You will see here **Bajo de Masinloc**, which is **Scarborough Shoal**, also historically known as **Panacot**.

It appears with depth soundings, along with the entire **Kalayaan Island Group**.

This is a complete representation of Philippine territory.

The name *Scarborough* comes from a British ship that ran aground there, but historically, it was known as **Panacot** and **Bajo de Masinloc**.

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## On Historical Maps Confirming Identity

There are historical maps that clearly show:

- **Panacot = Bajo de Masinloc**
- Bajo de Masinloc = Scarborough Shoal

Examples include:

- 1752 map by **Jacques Nicolas Bellin** (French hydrographer)
- 1790 map by **Góngora**
- 1799 map by **Antonio Zatta**

All confirm the same identification.

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## On the Kalayaan Island Group (Spratlys)

The Spratlys appear as:

- *Los Bajos de Paragua* (Shoals of Palawan)
- First shown in the **1734 Murillo Velarde Map**
- Expanded in the **1808 map**
- Fully detailed in the **1875 map**

By 1875, all features were mapped with names and depth soundings.

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## On the Treaty of Paris and Treaty of Washington

The **1898 Treaty of Paris** included a map—but the **text and map did not match**.

Many islands were excluded when using the coordinates.

This led to a dispute and the signing of the **1900 Treaty of Washington**, which clarified:

All islands belonging to the Philippine Archipelago, even those outside the Treaty of Paris lines, were ceded to the United States.

This is the **forgotten treaty**.

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## On International Law

Justice Carpio cited key cases:

- **Island of Palmas Case** – continuous display of sovereignty required for inhabited territories
- **Clipperton Island Case** – uninhabited islands require only first claim
- **Eastern Greenland Case** – same principle applies

Conclusion:

- Scarborough Shoal and the Spratlys were **uninhabited**
  - Spain's claim in **1734** made title complete
  - This title passed to the Philippines
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## On UNCLOS and Territorial Limits

Under international law:

- Territorial sea = **12 nautical miles**
- EEZ = **200 nautical miles**

The Philippines must follow UNCLOS.

Claiming beyond that would violate international law and isolate the country.

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## On the 2016 Arbitral Award

The arbitral ruling:

- Invalidated China's **nine-dash line**
- Affirmed Philippine rights in the EEZ

However:

- Enforcement remains partial
  - The Philippines still cannot fully utilize areas like **Reed Bank**
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## [QUESTION AND ANSWER]

### On the Treaty of Washington

Justice Carpio acknowledged:

- It was not taught widely
  - This led to misunderstanding of Philippine territory
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### On Filing New Cases Against China

He recommended:

- Case on **fishing rights in Scarborough Shoal**
  - Case on **extended continental shelf**
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### On Joint Development

Possible only if:

- Philippine law applies
- Sovereignty is not compromised

China rejected these conditions.

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### On Enforcement

Malaysia and Indonesia successfully extracted resources.

The Philippines has not—due to lack of political will.

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### On ICC Membership

Justice Carpio supports rejoining the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**.

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### On U.S. Dependence

He warned:

- The world is shifting toward **spheres of influence**
  - The Philippines must diversify alliances
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## [CLOSING REMARKS]

The National Library reaffirmed its commitment to preserving the country's documentary heritage.

Justice Carpio's donated maps will now serve as educational tools for future generations.

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**END OF TRANSCRIPT**