

19 February 2013

The Department received this afternoon from Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Ma Keqing a Note Verbale stating that China rejects and returns the Philippines' Notification and Statement of Claim.

The Department stresses that China's action will not interfere with the process of Arbitration initiated by the Philippines on 22 January 2013. The Arbitration will proceed under Annex VII of UNCLOS and the 5-member arbitration panel will be formed with or without China.

In its Note Verbale, China reiterated its often stated position that it has indisputable sovereignty over the entire South China Sea encompassed by its 9-dash line claim. This excessive claim is the core issue of the Philippines' arbitration case against China.

The Philippines remains committed to Arbitration which is a friendly, peaceful and durable form of dispute settlement that should be welcomed by all. END