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# On West PH Sea: Presidential bets agree on diplomacy; Duterte eyes another option

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(L-R) Binay, Santiago, Duterte, Poe and Roxas

**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines)** — Ironing things out with the help of the international community and arbitration court.

This was the solution eyed by presidential candidates during their third and last official face-off at the University of Pangasinan on Sunday (April 24).

Vice Presidential Jejomar Binay, however, said that while talking to China, he would make sure that Filipino fisherfolk, in the meantime, would have food on their table by giving them livelihood. He also promised free education for the children of fishermen, along with free medicine and hospitalization.

Aside from diplomacy, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago — who spouted off that she had a doctorate in juridical science from the University of Michigan — said she would also take the legal route, as what the country did by taking the sea row to The Hague.

To saber-rattlers, Santiago — who was also known for her sense of humor — posed a hypothetical situation, in reference to China's over a billion population.

"Madali sabihing i-giyera natin sila. Eh kung matalo natin ang Tsina at nag-surrender sila, ano ang ipapakain natin sa kanila?"

[Translation: It's easy to say that we should go to war with China. But what if we won and they surrendered? How will we feed them?]

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Sen. Grace Poe likened the situation to a grade school pupil being bullied in school and said the Philippine Coast Guard should be strengthened with more vessels and communication radios.

Administration bet Mar Roxas said the country should seek assistance from the international community but he would also see to it that fishermen would be given cash-for-work programs, PhilHealth coverage and free education for their children.

Roxas also said a president should remain patient at all times because his decisions could mean life or death for the soldiers.

Duterte's antics continue

Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte said that he would also take the arbitration route. However, should the court decide in favor of the Philippines, he would go to China to tell them about the ruling and ask them to abide by it.

Duterte said if the Chinese government still refused to recognize the court's decision, he would still not risk war with a superpower because it would mean a "massacre" for Filipino soldiers.

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Instead, Duterte said he would ask the Philippine Navy to bring him to the nearest boundary of the disputed waters. He said he would then take a jet ski and drive off to the contested area to plant the Philippine flag himself.

"Pag pinatay nila ako dun, bahala na kayong umiyak dito sa Pilipinas."

[Translation: "Should they shoot me dead there, you can just cry for me here in the Philippines."]

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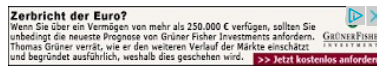
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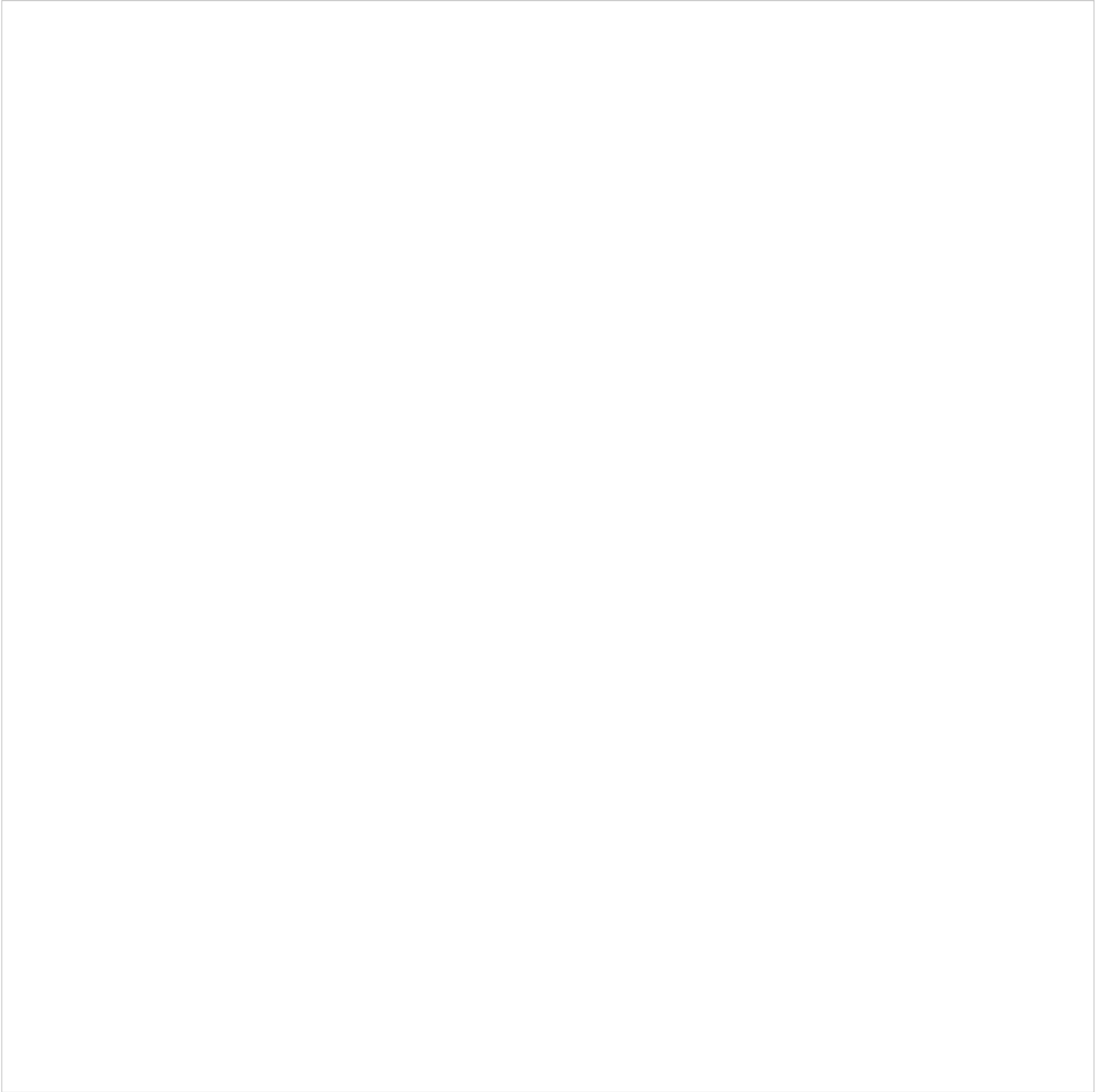
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