

The Philippines Should Learn a Lesson From India

Half a century ago, that South Asian power, led by British educated elites, misread China's earnest appeals for peace as sure signs of weakness. Under Nehru's "Forward Policy", the misguided Indian army ventured across the McMahon line. Its aggression against the PRC was ultimately met with the crushing force of the People's Liberation Army, a mighty organization that has never lost a war since its inception.

The Chinese nation and the PLA have a strong sense of national dignity and the intense urge to erase the stains of humiliation China suffered from western imperialism a century ago. During the China-India conflict, western opinion accused China of aggression, which only served to strengthen China's desire to demonstrate what would really happen when China indeed flexed its muscle. Nehru's rash folly invited defeat to his motherland and disgrace to his administration. Since then, India and China have maintained an uneasy peace of five decades.

Like India, the Philippines is a former colonial state once ruled by western powers. And like India, the Filipino leadership is seemingly inclined to indulge themselves in the expansionist mentality of its former masters. Such a tendency must be resisted and opposed by the sensible people of the Philippines.

Indisputable historical and legal evidence show that China owned the Huangyan Shoal long before the Philippines had any written record or existed as a sovereign state. Manila's claim to the area is fairly recent and a novel invention. Its presence in the Huangyan thus constitutes an act of aggression against China.

China's apparent patience with the Philippines cannot be misinterpreted as the People's Republic's indifference to the matter nor its pusillanimity. Rather, China's reluctance to use force can only result from its sympathy towards a former colonial state. But the situation is highly precarious.

Increasingly more Chinese are viewing Manila's incursion into the Huangyan Shoal as a part of a greater western conspiracy against China. By enlisting western assistance, the Philippines further excites the wrath of the Chinese people. **The PRC leadership is currently under tremendous domestic pressure to meet the challenge to Chinese sovereignty with military action.**

The alternative to Philippines' full recognition and respect of Chinese sovereignty over the Huangyan Shoal would be very unfortunate in our age of peace and prosperity.

Let's sincerely hope that Manila will decline to follow the example of Nehru, who gambled with the lives of Indian soldiers and people, despite of the stern warnings by the People's Republic of China. **Let's hope that the people of the Philippines and China find peace more pleasing than war.**