

US should back China's anti-terror efforts

By Zhao Minghao

The US government and media have outraged the Chinese people with their indifferent attitude toward the inhumane Kunming terrorist attack on the evening of March 1. Some 29 innocent civilians were slashed to death and over 140 injured, with the senior, women and children included.

The mob came from Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and a black, hand-painted flag of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement was found at the scene.

However, quite a few Americans view this attack as a legitimate action by a Chinese ethnic group striving to justify their rights and these extreme Islamic "jihadists" as human rights defenders.

From the 9/11 attacks in 2001 to the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013 in the US, the Chinese government and people always expressed sympathy and support in an explicit way for the US when it was plunged into calamity. But Washington adopts a double standard in tackling terrorism, not only sabotaging the positive development of Sino-US relations in the long term, but also risking blowback.

As a policy term, blowback means that political organizations endorsed by US government agencies like the CIA finally target the US.

For instance, some attribute the rise of militant Islamic groups in Afghanistan to support provided to anti-Soviet forces by the US in the 1980s.

The US has fallen victim to its own geopolitical game in which it took ad-

vantage of extremists.

Then came the explosions during the Boston Marathon in April 2013. Russian intelligence agencies had informed Washington of the attack plan of some Chechen extremists in as early as November 2011, but the latter paid little heed to such information due to its dubious affiliation with Chechen separatists.

US Senator Rand Paul questioned why culprits from Chechnya, a hotbed for Islamic extremists, would be protected by the US. In actuality, Ilyas Khamzatovich Akhmadov, exiled foreign minister in Chechnya's separatist government, has not only been to the world's greatest power to launch political lobbying but also obtained political asylum. Most ironically, it was a Boston judge who approved Akhmadov's application for asylum.

Principal members of the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya, the separatist forces' lobby in the US, consist of former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and James Woolsey, former director of the CIA.

Furthermore, Washington has committed other severe errors in its anti-terror endeavor. In 2003 when the flames of the war in Afghanistan were still blazing and Al Qaeda was still plaguing the whole world, the US waged the war in Iraq under false pretences, offering a chance for terrorist forces. It was proved, however, the Saddam Hussein administration neither had connections with Al Qaeda nor weapons of mass destruction.

The Obama administration prefers



Illustration: Liu Rui/GT

drones to ground forces in fighting terrorists, but the prohibitive manslaughter rate by drones has caused hatred among local residents, making it easy for terrorist forces to recruit members.

According to Thomas Hegghammer, a Norwegian scholar who specializes in violent Islamism, the two wars have bred some 10,000 to 30,000 Muslim jihadists.

Now the US government will withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Washington attempts to hand over the burden to the weak

Afghan government to fight against terrorism. The whole Central Asian region including Afghanistan will likely become a safe haven for Al Qaeda and other terrorist forces.

The terrorist forces in Central Asia constitute a headache for Russia and China, but will the US be free from their attacks?

Washington adopts a double standard in this connection and rejects committed cooperation with Beijing and Moscow, triggering discontent even in New Delhi.

Safeguarding the stability in Afghanistan and improving anti-terrorism capacity could have become an important area of Sino-US cooperation. Plus, the US could have worked with China, Russia

and India to forge a coalition against Islamic extremism. But it is perhaps losing these opportunities.

The Kunming attack has touched the nerves of not only China but also the US that should remain alert to the relevant warning signs. Supporting China in the anti-terror war is in the long-term interest of the US.

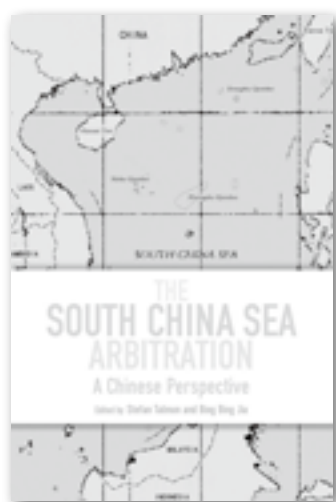
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Sino-Philippine disputes better settled by honest talks than lawsuits

By virtue of its position, the South China Sea forms part of a vital route for maritime trade and transport for East Asian and Southeast Asian countries and their trading partners in Asia, Africa and beyond, which gives this area great geopolitical significance. Therefore, disputes over regional control and influence among the littoral states are bound to arise.

The Philippines has played quite an extensive role in making claims over territorial sovereignty in the South China Sea. On January 22 2013, it instituted arbitral proceedings against China under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) with regard to disputes between the two countries in the South China Sea.

The South China Sea Arbitration – A Chinese Perspective, edited by Stefan Talmon, professor of Public International Law and director at the Institute for Public International Law at the University of Bonn and Bing Bing Jia, professor of International Law at the Tsinghua University



Stefan Talmon & Bing Bing Jia, eds, *The South China Sea Arbitration – A Chinese Perspective*, Hart Publishing, February 2014

Law School, centers on this international law case.

Books on important international law cases are normal, but this one rises above the others due to its focuses on various parties involved, the legal questions to be decided and the absence of one of the parties.

China has declared that it will not have any part in the arbitral proceedings instituted by the Philippines under UNCLOS with regard to disputes in the South China Sea. The book not only analyzes the motivations of the Philippines, but also attaches importance to China's attitude despite its rejection to the arbitration request.

The Philippines floated the idea of submitting its disputes with China over entitlements in the South China Sea to adjudication, but the book reviews this "confrontational approach" from the perspective of the "politics of arbitration," drawing the conclusion that it may be questioned whether such acts will "really contribute to achieving peace, security and regional stability."

Through such actions, the Philippines has portrayed itself as a champion of "the peaceful settlement of disputes" and put the blame for the failure to reach a negotiated settlement squarely at the door of China,

so as to gain an easy excuse for not continuing bilateral negotiations.

The book argues that the 13 points of the "Relief Sought" by the Philippines have neither "given rise to a dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention" nor can these points be "addressed without considering matters which are or have been validly removed from the jurisdiction of the Tribunal." Hence, China's non-participation in the proceedings becomes easily understandable.

After analyzing the validity of China's default of appearance in this case, the book also examines why it happens. In the latter part, China's reasons for refusing the arbitration request are explained: The request fails to fulfill in good faith legal obligations under UNCLOS, serious legal flaws exist in the notification and statement of claim, and it breaches numerous dec-

larations and bilateral agreements.

Based upon the mentioned above, the book suggests that the Tribunal, established to hear the case brought by the Philippines against China, would be well advised to refer the disputes back to the parties for them to reach a negotiated settlement.

The book offers a balanced Chinese perspective on some of the issues to be decided by the Tribunal, showing that there are insurmountable preliminary objections to the Tribunal deciding the case on the merits, and that it should be referred back to the parties so they can reach a negotiated settlement.

There has been no conclusive proof as to the failure of negotiations, according to the book, which leaves enough room for a peaceful settlement as the best way out of the current confrontations between the two parties to the disputes.

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