

## Power Determines State Maneuvers in the South China Sea Dispute: A Reflection for Muslims

### News:

Amid escalating tensions in the South China Sea, the Philippines has emphasized that it is not adopting a "war footing" with Beijing. The country is focused on peaceful resolutions, according to Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo. This comes after China's coastguard interfered with Philippine vessels delivering supplies to troops stationed on a grounded ship in the contested waters. China's embassy expressed concerns about the Philippines' confrontational stance and urged dialogue. The Philippine defence chief, Gilberto Teodoro, called on China to halt construction activities and hostile actions in the South China Sea for constructive talks. China's claim to the South China Sea contradicts competing claims by other nations, including the Philippines. Efforts to establish a code of conduct for the region have yet to yield results. Despite this, China continues to reject a 2016 international ruling against its claim. (Source: <https://www.scmp.com>)

### Comment:

The ongoing South China Sea conflict has reached a point where it is evident that countries with greater economic and military power, such as the United States and China, have more room to maneuver. Meanwhile, weaker nations can only voice complaints, condemnations, or call for negotiations. The Philippines is one of the countries bordering the South China Sea and is involved in disputes with China over maritime boundaries. However, in many cases, China's provocative actions towards the Philippines are met with limited responses from the Philippine government. This situation is mirrored in Southeast Asian nations, including countries in East Asia like Japan and South Korea, which also have conflicts with China. Due to the imbalance of power with China, these nations choose to rely on the United States for defense assistance.

This phenomenon is also observed in predominantly weak Muslim nations that depend on major powers like Russia, China, and the United States. This position prevents Muslim countries from acting independently and making a greater contribution to various international issues, especially those affecting fellow Muslim nations. It is urgent to realize the command of Allah (swt) in Surah Al-Anfal, verse 60, which obliges Muslims to become the strongest political entity in the world, supported by military might that creates fear among the disbelievers. However, neglecting this command has resulted in Muslims often feeling fearful when confronted by the power of their enemies. They have become objects of contention, much like food on a plate, even though the number of Muslims is abundant, akin to foam on the ocean's surface.

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