Ivan Chen

1/10/2013

World History

Mrs. Mastromauro

Letter to Queen Victoria Response

Greetings, Emperor Qing Daoguang,

I have recently received a communication from Commissioner Lin Zixu, regarding the effects of the opium trade in China. He requested that I respond with updates on negotiating a stop to the opium import to China. However, my response to such a ridiculous proposition is that Great Britain intends to do no such thing.

You claim that the problem lies in the fact that foreigners have been smuggling opium into your borders. However, one must begin to question whether the problem truly is with the foreigners, or rather with your own country itself. What respectable leader could simply allow an “unwanted” product to be transferred through his country’s borders? Perhaps if you had decided to invest your time not in pleading unrelated countries, such as mine, to interrupt their fair commerce, and had instead focused on strengthening your borders and trade regulations, you may see some more productive results. Your worthless words are a waste of your own time, which would have been much better spent on fixing your own situation and controlling your own citizens. Keep that in mind before you decide to send me another pointless dispatch.

I have also received reports of my merchants and businesspeople having their products and money seized and burned by your authorities. Do I need to remind you that your country is under my sphere of influence and that my merchants have the free ability to trade in your country? How are you violate this agreement by threatening the execution of our honest businessmen. We are providing your country with imports that will be profitable for both our economies, yet you continuously reject our merchants and jeopardize this favorable trade by arresting and threatening our agents. Keep in mind that Great Britain is the leader in economic progress in this world, and you are only hurting your own country by refusing to accept our businessmen’s imports.

You also claim that while your country exports only beneficial products, it is unfair that you receive opium in return. You have failed to consider that opium itself is a beneficial product as well. In other countries of the world, the population is fully capable of utilizing opium appropriately for medical or recreational purposes. Their people have no problem with this product and have found many beneficial uses for it. However, it seems that your country is the only one that cannot handle this advantageous product. As soon as your countrymen grab a hold of this product that other countries can use for good, they begin to abuse and immediately become addicted to it, spiraling their already weak minds into further weakness. Learn to control your people, emperor, they require a ruler that can do so. Elsewise your country will soon be full of drug abusers who cannot resist negative influences, and you will be completely at fault for failing as emperor. It seems to me that your own countrymen’s greed is the root of this problem you have.

How can you accuse these respectable merchants of being greedy while the avarice of your own people are to blame? These people are simply working to make a living off of trade, and you threaten their livelihood through threats of arrest and execution? We live in a world of free trade, and your preposterous ideas of removing this ability to freely make business, just because your people cannot control themselves, is laughable. Our rules allow for businessmen and merchants to make profits by selling, and your people are the ones buying. Our hard working merchants, or “barbarians”, as you insultfully call us, simply supply the demand from your own barbaric people through trade, people who savagely fight and kill for a few grams of opium. We will continue to keep trade free, and your threats to close such lanes will result in immediate retaliation.

I believe Lin Zixu tried threatening our country by hinting at a complete shutdown of trade routes from China and Great Britain. I seriously hope that these threats are not intended to be carried out. Not only would you be depriving your own country of necessary materials, you will have made an enemy of Great Britain. How does a country full of delirious drug abusers expect to stand up to the might of the British army? We are kindly offering our products in trade of the Chinese materials that we require. If you do not wish to comply with these agreements and would rather stop the trade, we will gladly take the materials, with the necessary force. Do not threaten a nation that is stronger than yours, emperor, if you do not intend to back them up.

I would like you to reconsider your thoughts on the opium trade. Opium is a beneficial product to the rest of the world, yet your countrymen manage to somehow use it for harmful purposes. Do not blame the rest of the world while the problem lies in your own people who cannot control themselves, and as emperor, you are failing at your duty to control them. Control the greed of your own people; don’t blame it on the respectable merchants who are trying to make a living. Also, be very careful of who you point your empty threats to. We have the power to completely take over your country, yet we kindly allow you to benefit from our relationship through trade and commerce. Appreciate what you have, emperor, and do not threaten to close your trade routes, before it results in force. After receiving this dispatch will you immediately give us a prompt reply regarding the details and circumstances of your beginning to control your own people and solving the opium problem in your own country? Be sure not to put this off.

Regards,

Queen Victoria