



Recently, the outspoken president of the Philippines has been making fiery news headlines. This old scribe respectfully suggests that he change the tune of his rants. Instead of dissing other world leaders, he should sing the praises of his nation. It seems no tourists today realize that The Philippine Islands are among the most beautiful travel destinations in the world.

When your travel4seniors.com editor was there the first time, it was brutally devastated in World War II. I was a crewman on a Navy troopship, and we put 2,800 Army guys ashore on Leyte Island in October 1944, to free the Philippines from the brutal Japanese occupation. For the next year, as a member of a Navy advance unit, I traveled throughout the islands, including Leyte, Samar, Mindoro, Mindinao and Luzon. I admired the friendly people, who never wavered in their loyalty to the US. Unfortunately, they suffered horribly for it at the hands of the murderous Japanese occupiers.

Of course, these days the Japanese are our good buddies. However, we very, very old vets can't ever forget the dark history of WWII. When Pearl Harbor was bombed without warning on December 7, 1941, it was also the start of sudden and murderous Japanese atrocities in the Philippines.

Just a day after the Pearl Harbor attack, Japanese troops landed on Luzon. Then, as the unprepared US and Filipino forces were pushed back by overwhelming enemy invaders, all the news was bad. The capital city of Manila fell. Corregidor fell. And the infamous Bataan Death March marked a dark day in history.

Since then, our once bloody enemy has been washed clean of all guilt for its murderous treatment of American and Filipino soldiers and civilians. Today, Japanese schools don't even cover the disgraceful truth about their shameful atrocities.

Through the decades after WWII, Japan was rebuilt with the help of the US, while the Philippines were virtually ignored. As a result, Japan today is one of the most prosperous nations in the world, and a favorite tourist destination for Americans.

I've never understood why the Philippines were left in the backwater and still considered a poor choice for tourists? Much of the blame is that the nation was for too long ruled by crooked politicians, including Ferdinand Marcos and his Imelda.

I recommend Americans should visit the Philippines. I also wish that US and Filipino politicians, as well as investors, will finally realize the potential of this sunny land. Its wonderful people deserve support, and their nation has the potential to become a world-class travel destination.