

Tokyo plays up 'military theory'

By WANG CHENYAN
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Japan keeps using China as an excuse to build up its military muscle as NHK, Japan's national public broadcasting organization, reported that the Tokyo's forthcoming white paper on defense warns that China's military movement has raised concerns worldwide.

Japan's 2012 white paper on defense questions China's military spending, citing data that shows it has increased 30 times in the past 24 years. The white paper says spending on defense will continue to grow as China develops aircraft carriers and other advanced weapons.

The annual report also said that Chinese naval ships have appeared more frequently in the Pacific Ocean, especially in the East and South China Sea and waters off the Diaoyu Islands, according to NHK.

"Japan is rendering China a threat and making China a good excuse," said Wang Fan, director of the Institute of international relations at China Foreign Affairs University.

Wang said Japan is working with the US on Washington's return to Asia-Pacific strategy because Tokyo does not have an independent defense strategy.

"Tokyo and Washington are processing a new round of military deployment, and they need domestic support. So they have singled out China and played up the 'threat theory'."

"Japan aims at strengthening both its military power and military alliance with the US," said Liu Jiangyong, an expert on Japan studies and vice-dean of the Institute of Modern International Relations at Tsinghua University.

During a news briefing on Wednesday, Koichiro Gamba, Japan's foreign minister, admitted that "active movements of Chinese naval ships" serve as one of the reasons for his country to strengthen its south-west islands and deploy Osprey — a US-made multi-mission, military tilt-rotor aircraft, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Liu said Gamba's statement is "not surprising", and Japan already sees Beijing as a bigger threat than Pyongyang.

"Japan is always worried that China's growth will be provocative, since even China's means of self-protection might simultaneously pose a threat."

Liu said China's spending on defense has lagged behind spending on agriculture and education for a long time.

"But now that China's economy has expanded and fiscal revenue has increased, it naturally spends more on national defense."

Wang said the increase represents nothing more than a necessary process to modernize China's military.

"Both Japan and the US clearly know that the increase in China's military budget comes from upgrading its self-protection capability. China has not yet achieved military modernization, and it needs better technologies to deal with new challenges."

"Last but not least, the fact that China has increased defense spending does not prove China presents a military threat to any other country," Wang said.

Regarding Japan's long-term defense policy, he also warned that right-wing activists in the country might stir up more trouble on issues related to offshore islands.

Liu added that the US will continue to have a significant influence on the policies of Japan's government.



ACTOR BALE PAYS RESPECTS TO SHOOTING VICTIMS

PHOTO BY JOSHUA LOTT / GETTY IMAGES VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A couple embraces as actor Christian Bale (second from right) holds flowers before placing them at a memorial across the street from the Century 16 movie theater on Tuesday in Aurora, Colorado. The memorial was created for the victims of the mass shooting that occurred at the theater on July 20. James Holmes, 24, is accused of killing 12 people and injuring 58 at a screening of the new Batman film.

Analysts say Japan's chaotic voices will harm relations

By ZHANG YUNBI
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Analysts said Japan's effort to involve the United States in its rival claim over China's Diaoyu Islands shows "its lack of bargaining power", and its domestic political chaos and contradictory remarks are stirring up frictions over the islands.

Like his predecessors, Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba has made repeated calls on Washington to take a position on the Chinese islands and affiliated islets in the East China Sea.

Gamba even told the Japanese House of Representatives on Tuesday that he had confirmed with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that the islands "fall within the scope" of the US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, an agreement symbolizing Washington's commitment to necessary security support.

However, Washington has not responded yet to the remarks, and Beijing on Wednesday slammed Gamba's remarks with "great concern and firm opposition".

"Any private deals made between the United States and Japan after World War II concerning the Diaoyu Islands are illegal and invalid," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a written reply.

The treaty should not undermine the interests of third parties, including China, and Beijing hopes "countries concerned can contribute more to regional peace and stability".

Gao Hong, a Japanese studies researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said Japan's repeated resorts to Article 5 of the US-Japan treaty shows a lasting shortage of bargaining power to back Tokyo's claim. Washington will not sacrifice US-China ties over the territorial issue, he added.

"The US will not commit itself to a major conflict with China, and mainstream Japanese opinion also places few bets on the possibility of US military support to the islands claim," Gao said.

Washington refuses to take a position on the islands, Patrick Ventrell of the US State Department said.

"We've clearly stated our policy on the issue of these islands," Ventrell said on July 16.

In addition to calling for help from other parties, some Japanese politicians and media organizations have sent vague or differing signals over the islands that have embarrassed the Japanese government, which again reflects the prevailing chaos in the Japanese political arena, analysts said.

While addressing the House of Representatives on Wednesday, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda did not respond directly to a request by some congressmen to land on the islands in mid-August to "commemorate deaths during World War II".

Noda reiterated the Japanese government's ban on landing on the islands, yet he said the claimants' feelings "should be given serious respect" and his cabinet will make a decision on the request after consideration, Japan's Sankei Shimbun newspaper reported.

The prime minister started pushing for "nationalizing" the islands in early July, and now he and his cabinet are trapped in

the dilemma of being pressed hard by both supporters and antagonists, analysts said.

"Noda knows the landing will lead to a major friction with China, yet domestic political pressure is asking him to be tough because nationalist forces are gaining momentum in Japan," said Yang Bojiang, a professor of Japanese studies at the University of International Relations in Beijing.

Yang also said Noda's current attention is focused more on pushing reform within the House of Representatives than the islands.

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CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY

As an official denial, Japanese Cabinet Secretary Osamu Fujimura said on Monday that the remarks are not within the scope of the defense minister's duty. He stressed that Morimoto only expressed his "personal opinion".

Chaos features in contemporary Japanese politics, and the differing voices stem from various domestic interest groups, said Gao.

Yang said conflicting positions are common among Japanese politicians because the country has not clarified its strategy on China, and the senior officials' opinions remain far from unified.

Former Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo walked out of a government hospital on Wednesday where she had been detained for nearly eight months on election rigging charges after a court found that evidence against her was weak and granted bail.

Wearing a neck brace, Arroyo smiled and held her grandson's hand as she left the hospital. She suffers from a neck ailment and has undergone three operations.

Court spokeswoman Felda Domingo said Arroyo was released after posting bail of 1 million pesos (\$23,250). She said Arroyo, who won a seat in Congress in 2010 after stepping down from the presidency, cannot leave the country and needs court permission to visit her district in the northern province of Pampanga.

UNITED STATES

Earhart's fate still a mystery

A team trying to solve the mystery of Amelia Earhart's fate 75 years after she vanished over the Pacific has ended its expedition to a remote island without finding her plane, the group said.

Researchers on July 3 set off on a \$2.2 million expedition and traveled 2,897 km by ship from Honolulu to Nikumaroro in the Republic of Kiribati to search for clues to her disappearance in 1937.

"We are returning from Nikumaroro with volumes of new sonar data and hours upon hours of high-definition video," The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery said in a statement on Monday.

XINHUA-AP-REUTERS

briefly

DPRK Kim's marriage confirmed

State media of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea confirmed on Wednesday that top leader Kim Jong-un is married.

In a report on his appearance at the completion ceremony of an amusement park in Pyongyang, the official KCNA News Agency said Kim attended the ceremony with his wife, who was identified as Ri Sol-ju.

SYRIA Turkey closes border gates

Turkey has closed its border gates with Syria to commercial traffic due to worsening security conditions but will keep them open for refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict, the Turkish customs minister and a UNHCR spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

Syrian rebels seized control of several gates on the Syrian side of the frontier over the last week in their 16-month-old uprising against President Bashar al-Assad and minister Hayati Yazici said the resulting insecurity prompted the move.

"Operations at our customs gates have been temporarily suspended," Yazici told a news conference in the capital Ankara, but said the gates had not been totally closed.

He did not say for how long commerce was being halted.

PHILIPPINES Ex-president released on bail

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China and US to work together in Asia-Pacific

By CHENG GUANGJIN
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The United States and China should work toward positive and stable interaction in the Asia-Pacific region, not confrontation, said Vice-Chairman of China's Central Military Commission Xu Caihou on Wednesday.

Xu made the remarks at a meeting in Beijing with US National Security Adviser Thomas Donilon, who wrapped up a three-day visit to China on Wednesday evening.

Xu urged the defense departments and militaries of the two countries to enhance strategic

communication and mutual trust, increase pragmatic exchanges and work toward cooperation.

He called for the two countries to take care of each other's core interests and major concerns, and overcome the difficulties and obstacles that affect the development of relations between the two militaries.

The two countries should "build up and develop benign interaction, which is positive, not negative, cooperative but not confrontational, in the Asia-Pacific region, and push forward the bilateral military relations in a healthy and stable way", Xu said.

Donilon said the US' rebal-

ancing toward the Asia-Pacific region not only refers to military, but also includes economic and diplomatic aspects.

He said the US strategic target in the Asia-Pacific region is to maintain regional stability and prosperity.

The US is willing to increase communication and cooperation with China in the Asia-Pacific region to safeguard regional security and stability, Donilon said.

Donilon noted that the China-US relationship is different from that of the US and former Soviet Union during the Cold War.

The two sides should increase communication to

avoid misunderstanding and misjudgment, he said.

Donilon also called for the two countries to increase cooperation in peace keeping, humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and professional exchanges.

China and US military ties have experienced ups and downs in previous years along with the fluctuations of bilateral relations.

During Defense Minister Liang Guanglie's visit to the US earlier this year, the first visit to the US by a Chinese defense minister in nine years, the two sides agreed to conduct a joint military drill against pirates in the Gulf of Aden later this year.

The Asia-Pacific region has been a hot spot on the world stage, especially after the US' strategic pivoting to this region where China and the US have the most converging interests.

In the latest development, South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported that the US will send more than 30,000 participants to the annual joint military drill with South Korea from Aug 20 to 31.

"It's the historical trend that China and the US, as big powers, shoulder the responsibility for regional stability and prosperity," said Wang Xinjun, a researcher at the PLA Academy of Military Sciences.

"Long-term peace and stability could be achieved in the Asia-Pacific region as long as China and the US don't misjudge each other's strategic intention," Wang wrote in a recent article published by the People's Daily.

Donilon also met with Vice-President Xi Jinping, Vice-Premier Wang Qishan and Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi before leaving for Japan on Wednesday.

According to The Associated Press, Xi said a consensus was reached on many points in bilateral talks with Donilon, that shows the importance the US government attaches to relations with China.