

WORLD

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Editor's note: As Feb 24 marks the one-year anniversary of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, China Daily is reviewing how it has reshaped geopolitics, impacted the global economy and aggravated the energy crisis.

US maneuver dents stability, stokes tension

Ukrainians and Europeans net victims of Washington strategy, experts say

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong and WANG XU in Beijing

Provocative action by the United States in the Asia-Pacific region and meddling by it and NATO in eastern Asia threaten regional stability as well as Asian and global economic growth and social development, analysts said.

Measures taken by the US and some of its NATO allies such as the United Kingdom and Canada in their so-called "Indo-Pacific strategy" are creating instability in the region, including leading Japan and South Korea on a path of militarism, with more frequent joint drills, the analysts said.

Karori Singh, emeritus fellow and former director of the South Asia Studies Center at the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur, India, said one manifestation of this is multilayered alliances, such as the Five Eyes, which groups the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, and the more recently established AUKUS, comprising Australia, the UK and the US. Another recently formed group, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, commonly known as the Quad, consists of Australia, India, Japan and the US. One aim of the Quad and NATO is to involve Japan and South Korea in military programs, Singh said.

In addition, AUKUS is trying to lure Pacific island countries with the offer of development and security aid, he said. "In reality, the search for regional security and development through such measures is bound to breed insecurity and restrict development."

Even some US allies are unhappy with what is going on, Singh said.

"Recent Nord Stream revelations are an alarm bell for the Europeans," he said, referring to allegations by the US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh that the US had had a hand in explosions in the Nord Stream gas pipelines in September.

Ukrainians and Europeans are "the net victims of US strategy," Singh said.

Moreover, demonstrations in Paris and Berlin in recent days and in Washington earlier represent "rage against the war machine" and show that people in the West are against US policies, he said.

Yoichi Komori, an emeritus professor at the University of Tokyo, said the US and NATO are using Japan as a shield in case of conflict. "It's very dangerous for Japan to give full play to its Self-Defense Forces in East Asia, which is also contrary to Article 9 of Japan's Constitution. We, the people, must not allow it."

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, chief executive of the Asian Institute of Eco-civilization Research and Development in Islamabad, Pakistan, said the peaceful rise of China is a constant irritant for the US and its allies. "After some failures including 'debt trap' accusations, they have

reverted back to the alliance building mentality of the Cold War era," he said.

The US had persuaded Japan to depart from its post-World War II policy of defense, he said. Then the US extended defense measures with the Philippines, including opening four new bases close and upgrading others.

Shigeki Nagayama, a professor of law at Tokai University in Tokyo, said: "The Japanese government has invited NATO to get involved in the Asia-Pacific region to enhance its own defense capability, and that will only destabilize the region."

Kazuyuki Hamada, president of the Research Institute for Future Technologies in Tokyo, and former parliamentary vice-minister for foreign affairs, said Japan's proposal for "an Asian NATO" or "a global NATO" runs counter to the zeitgeist.

"Japan's advocacy and the realization of it is nothing more than going against the post-Cold War era. This unnecessarily increases the arms race and reduces the value of diplomacy."

“
The hegemony of the US and its allies cannot continue to prevail in the post-pandemic world order.
”

Mustafa Hyder Sayed, executive director of the Pakistan-China Institute

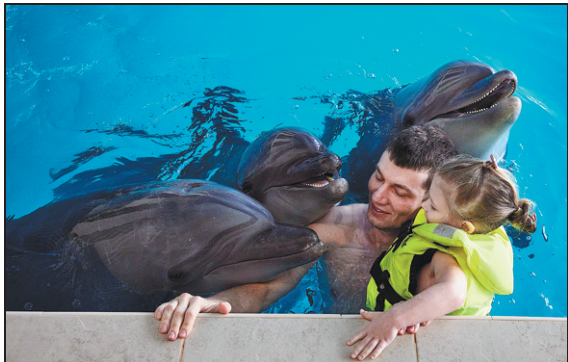
Mustafa Hyder Sayed, executive director of the Pakistan-China Institute in Islamabad, said the consistent pattern of the US seeking to create an Asian copy of NATO reflects the objectives in the NATO 2030 agenda that the military alliance published earlier.

However, such a Cold War mentality threatens regional stability and the development of the Asia-Pacific, the world's most robust growth engine, he said. "The hegemony of the US and its allies cannot continue to prevail in the post-pandemic world order, where collective wisdom, cooperation and connectivity is required to build bridges rather than create walls between countries."

The US and its allies must try to understand that China seeks peaceful coexistence, is integrated deeply in global development, and is the chief engine of world growth through programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, Ramay said. "The US and its allies should say goodbye to their hegemonic, confrontational and Cold War mentality."

Contact the writers at vivienxu@chinadailyapac.com.

Moment of tenderness



A father and daughter swim with dolphins at a dolphinarium in Kharkiv on Sunday. The dolphin park reopened in December after the evacuated animals were returned. ALEX MCBRIDE / GETTY IMAGES



Protesters in Brussels on Sunday vent their views in a demonstration calling for an end to the conflict in Ukraine. ZHANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Protesters call for end to standoff

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Henri-Jean Moxhet, a middle-aged man, held a banner with the word peace in multiple languages in the square outside Brussels-North train station in the Belgian capital on Sunday, a sunny but chilly and windy day.

He was one of about 2,000 people who demonstrated for peace in an event in which the organizer, Europe for Peace and Solidarity, said participants might differ on the cause of the Russia-Ukraine conflict but wanted de-escalation and peace talks to end the conflict, now in its second year.

"I'm demonstrating for peace," Moxhet said. "It's something that is now almost forbidden. If you want to talk about peace. ... I think it's very, very important that ordinary citizens can go on the street to show we do not agree with the government. We want peace."

Carolina Alvarez, from Mexico City, Mexico, was waving a flag full of "negotiate peace" stickers.

"I'm worried right now that the United States is involved," Alvarez said. "(It) probably means it could be the Third World War," she said, referring to increasing US military aid to Ukraine.

In an opinion poll conducted in Germany before the one-year anniversary of the start of the conflict on Feb 24, 51 percent of respondents said they thought arming Ukraine meant being part of the conflict, while 37 percent disagreed. The poll was conducted by the polling organization YouGov for the German news agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur.

Germany has approved 2.6 billion euros (\$2.75 billion) worth of arms to Ukraine in the past year, trailing the



A Ukrainian serviceman embraces his wife as she arrives from Kyiv at the train station in Kramatorsk on Sunday. DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP

US, the United Kingdom and Poland.

"Biden, stop the war," shouted Melra Apraxine as she marched with the procession on the Avenue du Boulevard in central Brussels.

"Today I want to demonstrate that we need peace in the world, and that too many people are dying. And I want to ask Biden, president of the United States ... to stop the war. Stop the armaments."

Matt Mercelis, of Sint-Niklaas, northern Belgium, voiced his objection to Belgian and European Union politicians, saying they "are promoting the war" by sending more weapons.

NATO is a "warmongering organization", Mercelis said.

Apart from the suffering of people in the conflict and the economic hardship caused, the conflict could escalate into a nuclear war that could spell the end of mankind, he said.

A peace demonstration was also staged in Berlin on Saturday condemning Germany's supplying weapons to Ukraine and calling for peace talks to end the conflict. Police said there were 13,000 protesters, but organizers put the number at 50,000.

Mercelis said he had learned about the 12-point measures China had laid out in a position paper on settling the Ukraine conflict politically, issued on Friday. "I really believe it can change something."

However, some Western politicians are likely to cast doubt in their "classic anti-China propaganda," he said. "They don't want to end the war."



Online
See more by scanning the code.

Russia welcomes China's peace proposal

By REN QI in Moscow
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

A position paper that China has issued setting out a possible path to peace in Ukraine needs to be analyzed in detail, the Russian government said on Monday.

Analysis of the paper, which urges both sides in the conflict to agree to a gradual de-escalation and warns against the use of nuclear weapons, should take into account the interest of all sides, the Kremlin said.

"We paid a lot of attention to our Chinese friends' plan," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, adding that: "Of course, the details need to be painstakingly analyzed taking into account the interests of all the different sides. This is a very long and intense process."

He said Russia was continuing to carry out what it calls its special military operation in Ukraine, and for now didn't see any signs sug-

gesting a peaceful resolution could be achieved.

China called for peace talks as it issued a 12-point position paper on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, which included the respect of all countries' sovereignty.

After meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday, Saudi Arabia pledged humanitarian assistance to Ukraine worth \$410 million, Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, the country's foreign minister, told a news conference in Kyiv.

It is the first time since the two countries established diplomatic relations 30 years ago that a Saudi foreign minister has visited Ukraine.

According to the El Sharq television channel, Riyadh and Kyiv signed a memorandum of mutual understanding on the supply of oil products to Ukraine.

It comes as fighting continues in the city of Bakhmut and the casualties are high.

Eduard Moskalov, Ukraine's com-

mander of joint forces operation, has been dismissed from his post, Zelensky announced Sunday. He did not provide an explanation for the dismissal, but it's the latest in a long line of recent leadership changes made by his administration.

Also on Sunday, Chairperson of the United States House Foreign Affairs Committee Michael McCaul said the US could send more advanced weapon systems for Ukraine, including longer-range missile systems or fighter jets.

However, US President Joe Biden on Friday ruled out providing the F-16 fighter jets Ukraine has requested, at least for the time being, telling ABC News in an interview that Zelensky "doesn't need F-16s now".

Peskov said that Moscow considers supplies of Western weapons to Ukraine as the West's growing involvement in the conflict.

Agencies contributed to this story.

How the US uses the conflict to smear China

Stories about China considering providing "lethal support" to Russia dominated Western media headlines on Feb 19. But China Daily's Media Unlocked team has found that Western media rely on anonymous sources, echo chambers and double standards to make unsubstantiated claims to smear China.

At least 46 stories on the topic appeared on Feb 19, repeating the claim from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken without providing evidence. The number almost doubled from the previous day.

On the same day at the annual Munich Security Conference, US Vice-President Kamala Harris warned China against supporting Russia. Parroting the same talking points, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the UN, said in an interview that China would "cross a red line" if it provided military support to Russia. The media reported the same claim by different people without providing evidence.

These reports always started with a government leak. The day before the news broke, CNN, in another story, cited an anonymous source saying that China would step up military aid for Russia. In January, the news channel quoted an anonymous source from the Joe Biden administration who suggested that Chinese companies had been providing nonlethal support to Russia in the conflict. The narrative now goes that the assistance is coming from the Chinese government.

The Western media has also demonstrated a double standard in the conflict. Two weeks after the investigative journalist Seymour Hersh reported the US was responsible for blowing up the Nord Stream pipelines in September, few stories relating to the incident appeared in mainstream Western media.

The millions of dollars in new defense spending from the Pentagon has helped further expand and line the pockets of weapons manufacturers.

Biased reporting on the conflict, and the campaigns that portray China as a perpetrator, have not helped end the conflict. These reports instead have helped push the conflict along and prolong it in ways that have only cost lives in Europe and sent money to the bank accounts of US weapons makers.

MENG ZHE and XU-PAN YIRU



Online
See more by scanning the code.