

► Growing pressure likely to 'cast shadow over US-Israel ties'

Israel expanding offensive in southern Gaza ignites worries

By Chen Qingqing and Liu Caiyu

Given Israel's military has been pushing its operations deeper into southern Gaza, intensifying its airstrikes and even reportedly considering flooding Gaza tunnels with seawater to drive out Hamas fighters, some Chinese experts raised concerns over the worsening humanitarian crisis. They described the offensive as reflecting Israel's determination of expanding its ground operations in Gaza despite mounting pressure from the international community.

As the Israel-Palestine conflict continues, the growing pressure could also cast a shadow over the US-Israel alliance, especially when there have been increasing divisions between the two countries, experts said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's four trips to Israel since the beginning of the conflict have not helped to resolve the differences between the US and Israel.

Israel intensified its bombardment in and around Gaza's second-largest city Khan Younis early on Tuesday, as ambulances and private cars came racing into a local hospital carrying people wounded in a bloody new phase of the war in Gaza, the AP reported.

Israel said it must dismantle Hamas' extensive military infrastructure and remove it from power in order to prevent a repeat of the October 7 attack that ignited the war, the report said.

Such an operation would put the Biden administration in a tough position and perhaps bring global condemnation, the media report said, citing unnamed officials, and the Israeli military must carefully strike a balance between pursuing their military goals and handling growing global pressure urging them to protect civilians.

"Israel's expanding military operations in Gaza in the past two days, especially the shift to the south, shows

that the previous cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas is a phased arrangement," said Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University. It shows that Israel wants to act across the whole of Gaza, and seek what it calls a complete elimination of Hamas, not by creating a buffer zone in the north as it previously stated, Liu said.

Li Weijian, a research fellow with the Institute for Foreign Policy Studies of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, said that Hamas is still holding many hostages, which it could leverage as part of negotiations for a comprehensive cease-fire, but Israel has vowed to eliminate Hamas, putting itself in a difficult position now.

As long as the war goes on, Israel will find itself in a more unfavorable position, the expert warned, noting that the US is also facing growing pressure from international community.

Nation shepherds global renewable energy R&D: experts

By GT staff reporters

China is proactively reducing its consumption of fossil fuels and is shepherding the research and development of renewable energy, which are solid guarantees that the country will steadfastly achieve its green energy targets, said experts in response to Western media's criticism of China for being silent on promising to phase out the use of fossil fuels.

Countries at the United Nations' COP28 climate conference in the UAE are considering calling for a phase-out of fossil fuels as part of the summit's final deal, according to a draft negotiating text seen by the Straits Times on Tuesday.

Phasing out fossil fuels has become a focal topic in this year's COP. Many foreign media have targeted China, along with other countries, for not acting proactively enough to cut off the use of forms of dirty energy, and for being silent on making promises.

The Straits Times cited a Global Carbon Budget report published on Tuesday which said that CO₂ emissions from coal, oil and gas are still rising, driven by India and China. German media Deutsche Welle pointed the finger at both China and the US for being silent on phasing out coal.

China has been active in reducing the consumption of coal and other fossil fuels in recent years, and is shepherding the world in R&D of renewable energy, said Wang Mou from the research center of urban and environment studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He said China is on track to meet its target of achieving peak carbon before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

China has achieved a significant milestone as its installed capacity of non-fossil energy power generation now accounts for 50.9 percent of the country's total capacity, media reported in June this year.

This achievement surpasses the initial goal of surpassing fossil fuel plants by 2025.

When attending a forum in September this year, Xie Zhenhua, China's special envoy for climate change, said that eliminating all fossil fuels is not realistic. He said that energy transition should respect the national conditions of each country.



Palestinians mourn the death of loved ones following an Israeli bombardment in the southern Gaza Strip on December 5, 2023, outside a hospital in Khan Younis, amid continuing conflict. Photo: VCG

US, Japan, Australia hold first joint command post drill 'with China in mind'

By Liu Xuanzun

The US, Japan and Australia recently launched their first trilateral command post drill that aims to boost the defense of Japan "with China in mind," a move Chinese experts said on Tuesday reflects the three countries' groundless, dangerous obsession in hyping the "China threat" theory.

Japan's Self-Defense Forces and the US and Australian militaries on Monday held an open-

ing ceremony for the Yama Sakura joint command post exercise at Camp Asaka of the Ground Self-Defense Force on Monday, Japanese broadcaster NHK reported on the day.

Participants will confirm procedures for sending troops to Japan from the US and Australia if Japan is attacked and working with Self-Defense Forces personnel to defend the country, NHK reported.

NHK noted that the three countries' defense chiefs in

June agreed to expand joint drills "with an eye on China's increasing maritime activities."

Song Zhongping, a Chinese military expert, said that the trilateral exercise sees China as an imaginary enemy. The three countries imagine that in a possible confrontation with China, they would need to fight under a system that consists of all military services and branches, so not only their maritime and air forces, but also ground forces are holding joint exercises.

China follows a national defense policy that is defensive in nature, not to mention that China does not share a land border with either Japan, the US or Australia, so there is no scenario in which the three countries' armed forces would be required to face the Chinese military, other than them starting a fight first, like intervening in the Taiwan question, analysts said.

Some Western countries are obsessed with hyping the

"China threat" theory, and are targeting everything they do against China without any convincing reasons, said another military expert. The truth is that the US and its allies are using the "China threat" theory as an excuse to maintain military hegemony, at the cost of other countries' rightful security concerns, the expert said.