

► US boosting military presence adding fuel to fire: expert

Hezbollah launches rockets at Israel as conflicts escalate

By Zhao Yusha

The likelihood of conflicts spilling over in the Middle East continues to rise as Hezbollah said on Sunday it had launched dozens of Katyusha rockets at Israel with Iran reportedly expected to attack Israel as early as Monday. A potential direct confrontation between Iran and Israel has emerged as the most significant manifestation of the spillover effects of the Palestine-Israel conflict, yet given Iran's domestic and international situation, an all-out war with Israel seems unlikely, said experts.

Three US and Israeli officials told US media Axios that they expect Iran to attack Israel as early as Monday. Iranian and Hezbollah officials have vowed to retaliate for the assassinations of Hezbollah's top military commander Fuad Shukur and Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh.

Experts expect any Iranian retaliation could potentially be larger in scope than the one in April as it could

also involve Hezbollah.

Hezbollah said Sunday it had launched dozens of Katyusha rockets at northern Israel in response to Israel's attacks on southern Lebanon, according to Lebanon's Al Manar TV.

A potential direct confrontation between Iran and Israel has emerged as a pivotal manifestation of the spillover effects of the longstanding Palestine-Israel conflict in the region, Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times.

Liu said that there is a risk of the conflict spreading beyond the borders of Israel and Palestine, potentially leading to a larger war in the Middle East.

Several countries, including the US and UK, urged their citizens to leave Lebanon while commercial transportation options are still available, amid fears that conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah could escalate, media reported.

Although the assassination of Haniyeh on Iran's soil is a blatant provocation to Tehran and will trigger Iran's fierce fightback, given Iran's current domestic and international situation, it's unlikely that an all-out war will break out between Iran and Israel, Liu said.

The US is boosting its forces in the Middle East in preparation for a possible Iranian attack against Israel and sending more warships and fighter jets to the region, the Pentagon said on Friday, according to Axios.

Wang Jin, an associate professor at the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies of Northwest University, told the Global Times that the US military deployment is adding fuel to the fire.

"What should be done now is mediation and coordination, especially persuading Israel not to take such extreme actions. The US should do more than just send troops, it should engage deeply and fulfill its obligations in the Middle East," Wang told Global Times.

Japan 'on risky path of reviving militarism' with enhanced military cooperation with Quad

By Liu Xuanzun

Japan is planning 2+2 ministerial talks with India and Australia focusing on military cooperation after similar talks were held between Japan and the US in July, and experts warned on Sunday that Japan is on a dangerous path to revive the militarism that once brought disasters to numerous countries in World War II.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Defense Minister Minoru Kihara are scheduled to travel to India sometime around August 20 to discuss ways to "achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law." Discussions may also include joint exercises between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and Indian military, and Tokyo's provision of defense equipment to India, Japanese broadcaster NHK reported.

The talks with Australia will likely take place early next month under the background that an agreement aimed at facilitating joint drills between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Australian military came into force last year, NHK reported, noting that the planned meeting will likely see the two sides agree to deepen cooperation under the pact.

Leaders in Tokyo aim to boost ties with both countries in light of "China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific," NHK said.

In late July, Japan and the US also held 2+2 talks, as US forces upgraded their command in Japan and reaffirmed their commitment to "extended deterrence."

Australia, India, Japan and the US are in a security dialogue known as the Quad.

Analysts said that Japan is enhancing its defense ties with Quad members in an attempt to break away from post-World War II military restrictions, taking advantage of the US' "Indo-Pacific Strategy" that aims to contain China.

Japan's 2+2 talks with the other three Quad members mainly focus on military cooperation, exposing Japan's scheme of expanding its military presence overseas and selling Japanese weapons to foreign countries and regions, a Beijing-based military expert who requested anonymity told the Global Times on Sunday.

Other countries should remember what disaster a militarist Japan brought to the world in the past, the expert said, urging Japan to learn from history.

A military encirclement around China also poses serious security concerns, as it harms strategic balance, raises tensions and brings negative factors to peace and stability in the region, observers said.

► Clash with police



Police officers detain a woman during a protest in Market Square in Nottingham, UK, on August 3, 2024. After stabbing attacks on July 29 in Southport, in which three young children were killed, members of far-right groups engaged in protests that often turned violent in British towns and cities.
Photo: VCC

Election disputes continue in Venezuela while US seeks to 'pursue suitable political ecology'

By Zhang Han

The unrest in Venezuela has not abated as supporters for incumbent President Nicolas Maduro and opposition leader Maria Corina Machado took to streets after dispute over election result continued, as supporters of Maduro crowded some of main avenues of capital Caracas on Saturday.

Chinese observers expressed concern over an escalation of the situation in the streets under the interference of the US

and some other Western countries, for which Venezuelans would have to pay the price.

Venezuela's electoral authority on July 29 announced Maduro was the winner in the election with a 5 percentage points lead ahead of opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez. Meanwhile the opposition claimed that its own detailed tally shows Gonzalez likely received 67 percent of the votes, earning more than double Maduro's support, the Guardian reported.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Gonzalez "for receiving the most votes" when he spoke with him and opposition leader Machado in a phone call on Friday, according to the Guardian.

Pan Deng, director of the Latin American and Caribbean Region Law Center of China University of Political Science and Law, was invited to observe the election as an international observer.

Pan told the Global Times that he is concerned that even

if the election authority later releases the detailed vote tally, the US will not stop hyping the issue to create more troubles. The US does not care about election process or the vote tally, but seeks to deny the legitimacy of the Maduro administration and his United Socialist Party, and choose a candidate that is satisfactory to the US to replace Maduro, the expert said.

The US is certainly attempting to pursue a political ecology that suits its own interests, so it will seek to pursue the mod-

erate right wing, pro-market forces and pro-American forces throughout the region, analysts said.

They added that the US is also very likely to continue to increase its support for the opposition, whether it is financial support, public opinion support and personnel training, all kinds of means of color revolution shall be used.

