



West sleepwalks into a trap of own construction

There is a fundamental problem with constantly predicting war and marching an increasingly militarized population toward it **7**

Canton Fair offers new potential for innovation

Companies are flocking to the Canton Fair with their latest fashions on display to tap into the new opportunities for innovation as China pursues industry upgrading **10**

US government returns to China 38 pieces of cultural relics

Chinese officials received 38 pieces of cultural relics returned by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office on Wednesday at a handover ceremony held at the Chinese Consulate General in New York **14**



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks as Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi listens during a joint press conference following their bilateral meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, April 18, 2024. At the conference, China and Indonesia both call for the Gaza cease-fire and express support to Palestine's full UN membership. (See story on Page 3) Photo: VCG

China expresses support for Palestine's full UN membership ahead of Security Council vote

By Wang Qi

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday called for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and he also expressed China's support for Palestine over the upcoming UN Security Council (UNSC) vote on its full UN membership, which is likely to be blocked by Israeli ally the US.

Although the Palestinian Authority is unlikely to be granted full UN membership, which would mean a recognition of statehood, analysts said the UN vote would bring the issue of Palestinian statehood back to the UN stage, which is of positive significance for pushing the international community to forge more consensus on the issue.

Regardless of the result, the vote will also put further moral and political pressure on the US and Israel, increasing the isolation of the two countries on the global stage when the majority of the world's countries have already recognized a Palestinian state, analysts noted.

After a meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi in Jakarta on Thursday, Wang told media that China is deeply saddened by the humanitarian disaster caused by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and an unconditional and lasting cease-fire should be immediately realized and

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Possible

► Trade tensions see more signs of escalating, cast great uncertainty

US targets Chinese steel with 'overcapacity' fallacy

By Li Xuanmin

US President Joe Biden is reportedly pushing for tariffs to "triple" on Chinese steel and aluminum, a new sign that Washington – disregarding WTO multilateral rules, US domestic inflation pressure and global supply chain stability – is targeting Chinese industries under the guise of "overcapacity" fallacy.

There is a chance that the tariff hike will be imposed,

observers said, as Biden is in the rush to win more support in his presidential campaign from the steel industries, which account for a large number of voters in the swing states, and as the potential tariff rise could also pave the way for more ongoing probes into relevant Chinese advantageous industries such as shipbuilding and new-energy vehicle.

Biden's tariff threat adds to an array of escalating trade tensions between China and the

US, and it runs in parallel with recent phased progress across multiple military, financial and economic aspects, which has been achieved through the two countries' intensive interactions.

Observers, while playing down the risks of another looming trade war, projected that bilateral trade tensions could grow wider ahead of the US presidential election in November, casting great uncertainty on whether the

China-US ties will maintain the stabilizing discourse. They stressed that the ball is in the US court to properly manage differences between the two sides, and more tellingly, to set aside its hegemonic and confrontational mind-set that has created numerous barriers to bilateral relations.

Biden's tariff threats

In a speech at the United Steelworkers headquarters on Wednesday, Biden called on US

Trade Representative Katherine Tai to "consider tripling" the existing 7.5 percent tariff rate on Chinese steel and aluminum through a review of the Section 301 tariff rate on China "cheating," according to a CNN report. The section has been under review for four years. The speech was reportedly made as part of Biden's economic competition pitch to Pittsburgh, a city in Pennsylvania

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► Inundated Dubai



Cars are stranded on a flooded street in Dubai following heavy rains on April 18, 2024. Dubai's giant highways were clogged by flooding and its major airport was in chaos as the Middle East financial center remained gridlocked on April 18, one day after the heaviest rains on record. (See story on Page 4) Photo: AFP

China urges US to immediately lift all protectionist measures

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that is in the heart of the American steel industry.

One of the intentions behind the tariffs increase is that Biden is considering an intense competition with Republican candidate Donald Trump in the run-up for US president. As a result, Biden is seeking to rally more union support in the swing states such as Pennsylvania, analysts noted. In explaining the tariff, a US official said that it aims to "protect those investments and those workers from unfair exports associated with China's industrial overcapacity... which poses a serious risk to the future of the American steel and aluminum industry," the CNN report noted.

"The so-called Section 301 investigation is a familiar playbook as the clause has been abused by the former Trump administration to justify tariffs in its trade war against China. This time, the Biden administration resorts the same tool again while disguising it with a recently invented bizarre 'overcapacity' tag," said Gao Lingyun, an expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"Whatever the excuse is, it cannot cover up the US' flout of WTO rules and malicious attempt to suppress China," Gao said, stressing that the "overcapacity" allegation equates to an inherently pseudo-concept that lays bare how hegemonic Washington is.

In response to Biden's tariff rhetoric, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian on Thursday said China has been asking the US to seriously respect the principle of fair competition, observe WTO rules, and

immediately lift all trade protectionist measures against China.

Biden also called China "xenophobic" and said China "got real problems" in his speech.

Responding to the remarks, Lin asked, "Are those words meant for China or the US itself?"

China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) also voiced strong objection to the tariffs on Thursday.

"The US ignores international economic, trade order and rules, politicizes economic and trade issues, abuses the so-called Section 301 tariff review process, publicly demands arbitrary adjustments to tariffs on Chinese products, and passes on conflicts, which is a mistake on top of a mistake," a MOFCOM spokesperson said "Such a move does not help solve the problems faced by US industries."

In 2022, the WTO ruled that tariffs on steel and aluminum imports that were imposed by the US under former President Donald Trump in 2018 violate global trade rules. China Iron and Steel Association said at that time that relevant trade is based on "industrial complementary and fair market rules," which did not harm the US and benefited downstream clients at the same time.

In a similar vein, the USTR announced on Wednesday that it was launching a new Section 301 investigation into China's trade practices in the shipbuilding, maritime and logistics sectors.

The move has immediately drawn strong opposition from China, with the MOFCOM issuing a statement overnight on Wednesday, lambasting the probe as a "mistake on top of a mistake."

Gao pointed out that there's a correlation between the investigations into China's steel industries and the downstream sectors such as shipbuilding and automobile.

"Tariffs on steel, which have a chance to be levied taking account of US' bad records in weaponizing trade tools, could pave the way for subsequent crackdown on industries which China has a competitive edge, but Biden could also be weighing the follow-up move more carefully as it would further fuel domestic inflation and meanwhile, send bilateral relations to a downward spiraling mode," Gao explained.

The imports of steel from China accounted for about 0.6 percent of total US steel demand, the CNN report said, quoting a US official as saying.

Washington will continue flaring up tensions throughout the US presidential election in November, with "more aggressive and confrontational" policies as both Biden and Trump wanted to cast themselves as "tough on China" to garner support amid US' toxic political environment, Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, told the Global Times.

In response to the 301 investigation, China's MOFCOM and Foreign Ministry vowed that the country "will take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard its own interests."

"China adheres to the basic principle of equality and reciprocity in its discourse with the US. It is likely that China will come up with countermeasures of 'similar scale' if US dares to engage in further unfair practices against China," Li said.

Possible US veto means more moral, political pressure, further intl isolation: expert

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civilians should be effectively protected.

Wang said humanitarian relief mechanism should be established as soon as possible to ensure rapid, safe, barrier-free and sustainable access of humanitarian supplies to Gaza. Wang, China's top diplomat, also called on relevant parties to maintain calm and restraint, avoid escalation of the situation and prevent spillover of the conflict.

China supports the UNSC in discussing and accepting Palestine's full UN membership as soon as possible, and proposes that a larger, more authoritative and more effective international peace conference be convened to formulate a timetable and road map for the implementation of the "two-state solution," Wang said.

Further isolation

With the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, France, Russia, Spain, Belgium, Ireland, UK, Australia and other countries have recently expressed support for the "two-state solution," with many of them even considering recognizing the Palestinian state, according to media reports.

In contrast, US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield told media on Wednesday that she did not believe the upcoming UN resolution would help lead to a "two-state solution." Earlier this month, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told media that the US opposes a Palestinian push for full membership at the UN, as it backs statehood but only after direct negotiations with Israel, according to VOA.

Niu Xinchun, executive director of the China-Arab Research Institute of Ningxia University, told the Global Times that six months after Israel launched the war in Gaza, an increasing number of countries, including some Western states, have changed their positions and expressed their opposition to Israel and its US ally.

Citing a high-ranking Israeli official, the report said eight UNSC members are expected to vote for Palestine, including China, Russia, Algeria, Malta, Slovenia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Guyana. The US and Israel are lobbying France, Switzerland, Japan, South Korea and Ecuador to vote against or abstain from voting, while the UK is expected to abstain.

If some of the US' European allies do vote for Palestine this time, it would be a huge blow to the US and Israel, said Niu, "Europe is more sympathetic to Palestine and the new round of Israeli-Palestinian conflict has divided the US and its Western allies to some extent."

The vote, even if it does not pass, will put moral and political pressure on the US and Israel, especially if another veto is used by Washington, which would make the US and Israel face greater isolation on the international stage, Niu said.

"The pressure from the international community will affect US support for Israel to some extent," said Niu. "And it's clearly not a good deal for the US to stand against the majority of countries in the world because of supporting Israel."

After the cease-fire in the latest round of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel may come under unprecedented pressure from the international community in pushing forward negotiations on the basis of a "two-state solution," although the eventual settlement of the conflict is still a very long and difficult process, said Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University.

