

► Beijing's impartiality, efforts to de-escalate tensions recognized: expert

China's top diplomat talks with Iranian, Saudi counterparts

By GT staff reporters

China's top diplomat Wang Yi held phone talks with his Iranian and Saudi counterparts Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud separately on Monday regarding the tensions between Israel and Iran, and the wider situation in the Middle East. Chinese experts emphasized that Beijing's recent actions demonstrate its commitment to playing a constructive role in de-escalating tensions in the Middle East and maintaining stability in the Gulf region.

They note that China's impartiality in mediating conflicts in the region has earned support and trust from regional countries. Experts also point out that causality on the recent Iran-Israel conflict is clear.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, told Amir-Abdollahian that China strongly condemns and firmly opposes the attack on the consular section of the Iranian embassy

in Damascus, regarding it as a serious violation of international law and unacceptable.

China has noted Iran's statement that its action taken was limited and was an act of self-defense in response to the attack against the Iranian consulate in Syria, Wang said.

Wang told Faisal that China appreciates Saudi Arabia's emphasis on resolving issues through diplomatic means, and that China is willing to work together with Saudi Arabia to avoid further escalation of confrontation in the Middle East.

Wang's phone calls with his counterparts of Iran and Saudi Arabia reflect that there are high expectations for China to mediate regional conflicts, said Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University.

China is willing to play a constructive role in de-escalating the tensions between Iran and Israel, as well as maintaining the hard-won peace and stabil-

ity in Gulf region brought about by the resumption of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Liu said.

Apart from exchanging views with Arab countries, China is also talking with Israel about the current conflict. Zhai Jun, special envoy of the Chinese government on Middle East issues, met with Israeli Ambassador to China Irit Ben-Abba Vitale on Monday.

Zhai elaborated on China's principled position on the conflict in Gaza and said that China is deeply concerned about the current escalation of regional tensions, and conflicts and bloodshed serve the interests of no one. All parties concerned should exercise maximum calm and restraint.

The current tension between Israel and Iran is due to Israel's bombing of the Iranian embassy. The merits of this issue itself are relatively clear. China's stance on this issue is not about taking sides, said Zhu Yongbiao, executive director of the Research Center for the Belt and Road at Lanzhou University.

Marcos rules out more military bases for US, 'pretending to be a stabilizer'



By Wang Qi

After a summit with US and Japanese leaders in Washington last week which is regarded as primarily targeting China, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said his government has no plan to give US forces access to more military bases in the Philippines. Chinese analysts commented that faced with regional concerns and domestic opposition, Marcos is pretending his government is a "stabilizer" at least on the surface, rather than a "troublemaker," however, Manila's provocation is unlikely to stop at any time soon.

According to the AP, Marcos made the remarks during a forum with Manila-based foreign correspondents on Monday.

Chen Xiangmiao, director of the World Navy Research Center at the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, told the Global Times on Tuesday that Marcos is attempting to sway other countries in the region that Manila is trying to calm down the situation.

He portrays himself as a nice guy that is trying to maintain regional stability in front of the media, Chen said.

Marcos' remarks came after the first-ever US-Japan-Philippines summit hosted by US President Joe Biden on Thursday in Washington, DC, in which the three nations announced they will deepen military cooperation in face of so-called China's dangerous and aggressive behavior.

After the summit, geopolitical competition and bloc confrontation in the Asia-Pacific is on the rise, and the risk of maritime friction is also increasing, said Ding Duo, deputy director of the Institute of Maritime Law and Policy at the China Institute for South China Sea Studies.

The Philippines, encouraged and supported by the US and Japan, will not stop its aggressive and provocative actions at sea in the short term, Ding said, noting that the Philippines may even make more infringements and provocative measures in public opinion, jurisprudence and on diplomatic occasions.

► Olympic flame lit



Greek actress Mary Mina (right), playing the role of high priestess, lights a torch during the official ceremony of the flame lighting for the Paris Olympics, at the Ancient Olympia site, Greece, on April 16, 2024. The flame will be carried through Greece for 11 days before being handed over to Paris organizers on April 26. Photo: VCG

Japan's diplomacy document exposes 'opportunistic, double-dealing motives' in its China policy

By GT staff reporters

In its latest foreign policy report, Japan is following the cliché of smears against China by playing up the so-called China threat and interfering in China's internal affairs, yet at the same time, it restored language that states it needs "strategic and mutually beneficial relations with China." Analysts said this exposes the country's opportunistic and double-dealing motives in its China policy.

According to Kyodo News on Tuesday, the 2024 Diplomatic Bluebook said Japan will promote a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" with China, using wording last seen in the 2019 report, although still claimed its neighboring country poses "an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge."

In response, Lin Jian, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said at a Tues-

day press briefing that China is firmly opposed to the Japanese document which has followed the cliché of smears and accusations against China, hyped the so-called China threat and interfered in China's internal affairs unreasonably.

We urge the Japanese side to correct its wrong actions, stop provoking and creating bloc confrontation, truly position the strategic and mutually beneficial relations with China as a guideline for the development

of bilateral ties, Lin said.

The two Asian neighbors remain at odds over various issues with Japan intensifying its efforts in joining the US to contain China.

Da Zhigang, director of the Institute of Northeast Asian Studies at the Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences noted that even as China and the US are in competition in multiple aspects, there has been significantly more high-level communication between

China and the US.

In this context, the first risk Japan faces is whether it can bear the consequences of blindly following the US' inducement to "de-risk" or "decouple" with China. The second risk is that Japan's participation in the US strategy to contain China will inevitably provoke geopolitical instability, Da said.

