

► China calls for preventing further spillover Iran ties retaliation to Gaza cease-fire, 'keeps options open'

By Zhang Yuying

Citing three senior Iranian officials, Reuters reported on Tuesday that only a cease-fire deal in Gaza stemming from hoped-for talks this week would hold Iran back from direct retaliation against Israel for the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on its soil.

Analysts said if the Reuters report is accurate, Iran, by linking the potential retaliation against Israel with the Gaza cease-fire negotiations, is keeping its options open.

When asked whether China was in direct or indirect contact with Iran regarding its retaliatory actions, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Wednesday that China has been calling for international efforts to bring an early end to the conflict in Gaza as soon as possible and prevent further spillover. China plays an active role in easing regional tensions, Lin said.

"We support all efforts that contribute to permanent and comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza, and will work with the international community to deescalate the situation and avoid further escalation of the conflict and confrontation," Lin said.

Iran has been preparing for potential retaliation against Israel, but it is also waiting for the right timing and assessing the optimal method of the attack, Sun Degang, director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Fudan University, told the Global Times on Wednesday.

"If Iran were to retaliate against Israel at this moment, it would bear a heavy diplomatic burden, as the retaliation could undermine the ongoing cease-fire negotiations in Gaza," Sun said.

According to Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, by linking the potential retaliation against Israel and

the Gaza cease-fire negotiations, Iran is keeping its options open.

Reaching a cease-fire agreement on Thursday is extremely challenging due to substantial disparities in the basic understandings of the negotiations between Hamas and Israel, Liu told the Global Times on Wednesday, as Hamas is eager to move forward with the implementation of the existing agreement, whereas Israel is adamant about reopening negotiations.

In comments published on Tuesday, US Ambassador to Turkey Jeff Flake confirmed that Washington is asking allies to "help convince Iran to de-escalate tensions," Reuters said. However, on the same day, the US State Department approved potential weapons sales to Israel totaling roughly \$20 billion, according to CNN.

"It is precisely the US' indulgence that has led to the tragedy in Gaza today. The US is the true instigator behind this crisis," Sun said.

Manila to send new vessel for 'semi-permanent presence' at Xianbin Jiao, breaking promises: source

SOUTH CHINA SEA WATCH

By Liu Xuanzun

The Philippines is planning to send a second coast guard vessel to anchor in the lagoon in China's Xianbin Jiao (also known as Xianbin Reef) in the South China Sea in an attempt to construct a forward deployment base in the form of a semi-permanent floating platform, the Global Times learned from a source familiar with the matter on Wednesday.

Manila is attempting to expand its illegal occupation of China's Xianbin Jiao, a move that seriously violates China's territorial sovereignty, Chinese experts said, noting that China will not let this take place.

Since mid-April, the Philippine Coast Guard's BRP *Teresa Magbanua* (MRRV-9701) has been illegally and harmfully anchored in the lagoon of the Xianbin Jiao for more than four months.

Now a second ship is scheduled to illegally enter waters adjacent to the Chinese reef and attempt to join the MRRV-9701 in a joint anchoring, according to the source.

The Philippines' intention is very clear: to further expand the established fact of expanding its occupation of the Xianbin Jiao, upgrade the scale of its semi-permanent floating platform, and in effect build a "semi-grounded" forward deployment base, Yang Xiao, deputy director of the Institute of Maritime Strategy Studies under the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, told the Global Times on Wednesday.

"China has repeatedly stated that it will not allow the Philippines to wantonly occupy the Xianbin Jiao, so of course China will not allow the Philippines to deploy another large coast guard ship to anchor on the Xianbin Jiao and increase the scale of the floating platform," Yang said.

Manila's vile attempt is a serious violation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), which states that the parties undertake to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability including, among others, refraining from action of inhabiting on the presently uninhabited islands, reefs, shoals, cays, and other features and to handle their differences in a constructive manner.

This latest provocation with malicious intent to disrupt the peaceful situation in the South China Sea seriously undermines international and regional order, and represents a full betrayal on its promise to neighbors and partners, the expert said.

► Court removes Thai PM



Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, talks to reporters during a press conference at Government House in Bangkok, Thailand after a court removed him from office over an ethical violation on August 14, 2024. Srettha said he performed his duty as prime minister as best he could, and said he "accepts the verdict."

Photo: VCG

Cooperation with China 'expected to continue after Kiribati's election'

By GT staff reporters

People in Kiribati went to the polls on Wednesday for the first round of voting in a national election with climate change, living costs and China ties in focus as president Taneti Maamau seeks to extend his tenure in the Pacific island nation.

While foreign media outlets are hyping that the national election serves as a "referendum on the government's stronger ties with China," Chi-

nese analysts emphasized that as cooperation between China and Kiribati has stood the test of history and meets the needs of the local community, regardless of who leads the next government in the Pacific nation, the cooperation is expected to continue and achieve greater results.

According to the Xinhua News Agency on Wednesday, 114 candidates are competing in the first round of voting for 44 parliamentary seats, with a

second round on August 19.

The election has come under spotlight for the current administration's close ties with China.

According to the Guardian, Kiribati, a nation of 115,000 residents, is considered strategic despite being small, because it is relatively close to Hawaii and controls more than 3.5 million square kilometers of Pacific Ocean.

China has always adhered to the principle of mutual re-

spect, never politicizing or imposing its national interests or strategic goals on Pacific island countries, which has earned widespread welcome from the local government and people, Chen Hong, executive director of the Asia Pacific Studies Center at East China Normal University, told the Global Times on Wednesday.

In recent years, China has become the preferred partner of Pacific Island countries for public security. China's police

cooperation has faced attacks from the US and some of its Western allies, Chen said.

China's cooperation with Pacific island nations is in response to their requests to enhance their policing capacity for the sake of social stability and public well-being based on mutual respect and equality, the expert criticized.

