

► US 'prefers helping Israel realize its goal' rather than protecting lives

UNGA to vote on resolution for cease-fire in Gaza after US' veto

By Yang Sheng

The UN General Assembly is set to vote on a resolution for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire on Tuesday afternoon local time, after the US vetoed a similar resolution on Friday. Experts said that even if the General Assembly passes a nonbinding resolution, the conflict would not stop because US, the only major power that is able to effectively restrain Israeli forces from worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza, prefers to clear the way for Israel to realize its ultimate goal rather than protecting lives.

After the US vetoed a resolution in the UN Security Council on Friday, Arab and Islamic nations called for an emergency session of the 193-member General Assembly on Tuesday. Riyadh Mansour, Palestinian ambassador to the UN, told media that the defeated resolution in the Security Council was cosponsored by 103 countries, and he is hoping for more cosponsors and a high vote for the Gen-

eral Assembly resolution on Tuesday.

In the vote on Friday at the Security Council, among the 15 members, 13 of them voted in favor of a brief draft resolution, put forward by the United Arab Emirates, while UK abstained and the US vetoed it.

This proves that Washington does not care about diplomatic isolation or criticism from within the US or around the globe, and unfortunately, the reality is that apart from criticism and sending humanitarian aid, the UN's role has reached its limit, said experts.

Ma Xiaolin, dean of the Institute for Studies on the Mediterranean Rim at Zhejiang International Studies University, said "even if the US abstains and lets the resolution pass, if Israel refuses to execute it, and Washington refuses to sanction Israel and maintains its military and economic support, a UN cease-fire resolution would still be useless."

Representatives of a dozen UN Security Council members, except the US and

France, on Monday made a trip to the Rafah crossing, the only border crossing between Gaza and Egypt. Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, joined ambassadors from other Security Council members on the visit, aiming to assess the humanitarian situation and challenges faced by the Palestinian people.

Liu Zhongmin, an expert at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, said if Israel has to occupy the whole Gaza Strip, then real challenges will occur.

"In order to realize its goal to eliminate Hamas, or totally disable the governance of Hamas in Gaza, Israel must take over the governance and rebuild the region based on Israel's preferences, and in order to realize this plan, it has to cooperate with local Palestinians and other Palestinians in the West Bank, and [do that] after killing 18,000, or more, of them during this war. Everyone can see how hard it would be," Liu said.

PLA's aircraft carrier Shandong transits Taiwan Straits after operation in the north

By Liu Xuanzun

The *Shandong* aircraft carrier group of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) reportedly returned to the south via the Taiwan Straits on Monday following a month-long operation in the north, with experts saying on Tuesday that the *Shandong* likely helped train pilots for another PLA aircraft carrier, the north-based *Liaoning*, which has been under routine maintenance.

The armed forces on the island of Taiwan detected the PLA Navy *Shandong* aircraft carrier fleet heading south along the Taiwan Straits steering along the west side of the so-called median line, the defense authority on the island said in a press release on Monday evening.

It marked the *Shandong's* return to the South China Sea after it was spotted sailing north through the Taiwan Straits a little more than a month ago on November 9.

When asked about the *Shandong's* northward transit in the Taiwan Straits without returning to its homeport in South China's Hainan Province after its far sea exercise in the Pacific Ocean, Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang, a spokesperson at China's Ministry of National Defense, said on November 16 that the PLA Navy organized exercises in relevant waters to hone and enhance the *Shandong* aircraft carrier groups' systematic combat capabilities.

A video published by China Central Television on Thursday shows that the *Shandong* hosted full-process takeoff and landing exercises for J-15 fighter jets at an undisclosed location in November.

During the *Shandong's* one-month voyage in the north, the carrier probably operated in the Bohai Sea and the Yellow Sea to help train pilots of the PLA Navy aircraft carrier *Liaoning*, which is based in the north but has been under routine maintenance, observers said.

Chinese military expert Song Zhongping said that fighter jet takeoff and landing operations are basically the same on the *Liaoning* and the *Shandong*, so when the *Liaoning* is under maintenance, it is normal that the *Shandong* can train pilots and crews for the *Liaoning*.

It also highlights the merits of having multiple aircraft carriers, experts said.

► Commemorating independence



A soldier (center) from the Kenyan Navy shouts to instruct his troops at a parade during the national celebration marking Kenya's 60th anniversary of independence from Britain, known as Jamhuri Day, in Nairobi on December 12, 2023. Photo: VCG

Zelensky finds greater difficulties in lobbying aid in his third Washington visit

By GT staff reporters

From a hero's welcome in the US Capitol in 2022 to facing a now bitterly divided Congress, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has found himself in increasing difficulties in lobbying Washington. Such a sharp shift in attitudes in the US has exposed that the true nature of the so-called commitment to Ukraine has always been US-centric, other than caring for the Ukrainian peo-

ple, analysts said.

According to the Associated Press, Zelensky, who kicked off his quick visit to Washington on Monday, issued a personal plea for Congress to break its deadlock and approve continued support for Ukraine.

This is Zelensky's third visit to Washington since the war began, and comes at a critical moment in congressional negotiations for emergency aid to Kiev.

Cui Heng, an expert at the Center for Russian Studies at

East China Normal University, said Zelensky was hailed as a hero by the West in 2022, not because of his personal excellence, but "because the West needed Zelensky to exhaust Russia at the expense of the Ukrainian people."

"The Russia-Ukraine conflict did not bring down Russia as the West had hoped. Instead, high inflation caused by the conflict has brought great suffering to Western people, and opposition to aid for Ukraine

is growing stronger in Western countries," Cui said.

"Zelensky has become closely involved in the partisan struggle in the US, which is not good for him. This means that many Republicans would oppose continued US assistance to Ukraine, precisely because Zelensky stands too closely with the White House," said Li Haidong, an expert at the China Foreign Affairs University.

The difficulty in resolving the Ukraine issue aligns with

the political agenda of the Republicans. It is an optimal diplomatic issue for Republicans to manipulate to embarrass the White House and the Democrats. We can see how toxic this process is to overall US foreign policy decisions, Li said, noting "being friend with the US carries risks, something Ukraine should be realizing now."