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PLA General: US engaging in gunboat diplomacy

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The United States will dispatch the aircraft carrier USS George Washington to the waters west of South Korea (the Yellow Sea) to participate in a series of U.S.-South Korean joint military drills, a spokesperson for the United States Department of Defense recently announced during a press conference. This is a 180-degree turn from the statements made by an official from the Pentagon in mid-July.

The Chinese government has reiterated that it firmly opposes the activities of foreign naval ships in the Yellow Sea and other offshore areas of China that affect China's security interests and urged relevant sides to pay serious attention to China's concerns and stance. However, the United States has insisted on sending aircraft carriers to the Yellow Sea to provoke China. What information has this transmitted? At least it shows that the foreign policy of the United States is still showing three features that have long been part of its global strategy.

The first is hegemony, under which the United States claims, "Since I am the dominant player in the world, I can go anywhere I want and others have no rights to interfere." The philosophical foundation of the American hegemonic mindset is the deep-rooted "manifest destiny" theory held by some Americans.

According to the theory, the American Nation is the most outstanding nation in the world. Its leadership in the world, which is bestowed by God, is undeniable. Therefore, Americans have the responsibility to handle world affairs and will appear wherever problems take place. Nevertheless, the results are usually the opposite – things become worse with the involvement of the United States.

The reason behind this is that they are convinced that the social system of the United States is the most advanced in the world. Therefore, they strive to sell their "democratic values" across the world, which sometimes means resorting to military action. They believe that the American nation is the most excellent, so they must "lead the world" and other nations have no choice but to follow them.

The United States will exercise its military power to punish the nations that do not follow its will. In their eyes, the security of other countries and nations is always put in the second position and even considered to be insignificant. They do not need to pay attention to security concerns raised by any other country.

The second is gunboat diplomacy. It can be summed up by the position that, "If you do not obey me, I will flex my muscles first. Then, if you do not behave better, I will teach you a lesson with my fists." The best example of U.S. gunboat diplomacy is the Naval Operations Concept 2010 approved by the U.S. president in May this year, which vividly described U.S. "maritime interests." According to the concept 2010, the U.S. naval forces will develop six core competencies: forward presence, deterrence, maritime security, sea control, power projection and humanitarian assistance.

What high-sounding language! First, the so-called forward presence means that the United States can send its gunboats to every corner of the world, tyrannize the weak and extend its security boundaries to others' doorsteps. This way, the United States can even claim the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea is covered within its security boundary.

Second, the so-called deterrence is no different from bully tactics, namely that "if you do not obey me, I will punch you." Third, the so-called maritime security is to ensure the inviolability of U.S. gunboats. The United States only cares about its own safety, and it should not be expected to ever care about others' safety. Fourth, the so-called sea control applies the logic of "whoever controls critical sea-lanes controls the seas, and whoever controls the seas controls the world."

Fifth, the so-called power projection is obviously for war rather than peace. Sixth, the so-called humanitarian assistance is only for the Americans and U.S. allies, while others only receive brutal and rough treatment from the United States. This U.S. behavioral style shows that it is still holding on to the Cold War mentality and still implementing gunboat diplomacy, the philosophical foundation of which is the law of jungle, namely bullying the weak.

Ironically, the United States, which has a blind belief in its military force and "speaks" only through its gunboats, is at once embarrassingly trapped in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The third feature of U.S. foreign policy is unilateralism, namely, "No matter how many people it involves, I am superior to all others, and I can do whatever I like. Everything must bend to American interests and will." The philosophical foundation of American

unilateralism is based on the zero-sum game and its basic principle is: what I obtain must be what others lose and vice versa, so what others obtain must be what I lose.

Therefore, the United States is never willing to communicate and consult with other countries, let alone think from others' point of views. Since Obama came into power, he has claimed to have broken clearly with former President Bush's unilateralist policies and pursued "smart power" diplomacy.

However, judging from the United States and South Korea's insistence on holding joint military drills around the waters of the Korean Peninsula, we see neither multilateral security cooperation nor the display of smart power. What we see is only unilateral confrontation and showing off of hard power.

The Chinese are peace-loving people, and China is now taking a peaceful development road different from when the imperialist powers rose. We do not want to be against any country, but we are not fearful if other countries ignore our solemn positions and core interests. A country must have the dignity and its army must have deterrence power.

China adheres to the principle "We will not attack unless we are attacked, and we must retaliate only if we are attacked," which is definitely not a joke to the Chinese people and the army. Doesn't the United States proclaim itself to be the most democratic country? Then, they should know in the 21st century, they ought to learn to respect others and listen to the public opinions of other countries, using wisdom but not gunboats to solve problems.