



Illustration: Liu Rui/Global Times

China doesn't need to take cues from US on with whom to have exercises

The Vostok 2022 military exercises will be held September 1-7 in the Russian Eastern Military District. Thirteen countries including China, India, Belarus, Mongolia and Algeria are invited to send troops to participate in the exercises. It's also the first time China has sent its Army, Navy and Air Force at the same time to an exercise. Against the backdrop of regional conflicts, the Vostok drills, held in every four years, will be "closely watched" by the US and Western public opinion, which particularized China among the many participating countries, claiming that Washington has been expressing concern about the "warming ties" between China and Russia, and even exaggeratedly branded the China-Russia cooperation "undermining global security."

Probably unable to find "proof of guilt," US and Western public opinion relies almost entirely on speculation to try to "incriminate" China. For example, many media have even hyped that Russia may intervene in the Taiwan Straits just because China and Russia will this time train in the Sea of Japan. But the irony is that the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group just had a joint exercise with the Japanese side in the Sea of Japan in April this year, and also made a big deal of claiming to improve the "credibility of conventional deterrence." Isn't it a realistic version of "the authorities can do whatever they like, but the common people are not allowed the slightest bit of freedom?"

The ever-strengthening comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between China and Russia has always been the least thing Washington wants to see. Over the years it has taken many actions overtly and covertly to drive wedges between China and Russia but all failed. After the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out, Washington began to denounce and sabotage China-Russia cooperation in a simple and rude way, and tried to turn "maintaining friendly relations with Russia" into a new "crime." Under such circumstances, the Chinese ground, naval and air forces going to Russia to participate in the military exercise is likely to arouse deep jealousy from some people in the US and the West. However, China is an independent major power. It's China's right to decide when, where and with whom we will hold exercises in accordance with our own security needs and training arrangements. We do not need to and cannot take cues from others to do so.

Under the new regional security environment, it is necessary for China, Russia and neighboring countries to continue to deepen military cooperation. China-Russia friendly re-

lations have never been a reason for the tension in the Asia-Pacific region, nor has any China-Russia joint military exercise stirred regional situation. Just imagine, if China and Russia, as two neighboring global powers, are suspicious about or confront each other politically and militarily, such a scenario must be an unbearable burden for regional security. Conversely, solid strategic mutual trust between China and Russia as well as fruitful bilateral security cooperation are vital positive assets for regional peace and stability. In contrast, it's Washington's aggressive posture and clamoring for "decoupling" that has caused widespread concern in the Asia-Pacific region.

Regarding the drills, the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of National Defense stated that the Chinese side's participation in the exercise aims to deepen pragmatic and friendly cooperation with the armies of participating countries, enhance the level of strategic collaboration among the participating parties, and strengthen the ability to respond to various security threats; and it has nothing to do with the current international and regional situation.

In particular, compared with the joint military exercises which Washington often flaunts as the "largest scale" and in which senior officers take turns emphasizing "deterrence," China-Russia drills are much more low-key in terms of the scale, the number of participating troops, and frequency. We don't need to stage a show to anyone. Washington is particularly nervous about the People's Liberation Army's participation in the military exercises in Russia, which indicates its lack of confidence.

The political imagination of Washington's elites is drying up. Due to the limitations of their visions, it is difficult for them to understand the independent value of China-Russia relations featuring non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting of any third party. And it is even more difficult for them to see the broad space of the new type of major-country relationship. This has made Washington to often overreact to China-US relations like suffering neuroticism: It sometimes exaggerates the "imminent threat" of China-Russia cooperation, while sometimes trying to sow discord between the two countries. But the more actively it does so, the more self-torment it will have to suffer, which will increasingly indicate their ill intentions.

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After Saigon and Kabul, now a 'Baghdad moment' comes into sight

Despite denial from the White House over reports that it had ordered personnel to evacuate from Baghdad, capital of Iraq, video clips which appear to show US Embassy employees in Baghdad being evacuated by a military helicopter still went viral on the internet. Some netizens say that after "Saigon moment" and "Kabul moment," the US military seems to be facing a new defining point – "Baghdad moment."

Iraq has once again felt the brunt of "democracy" – "democracy" wrapped as a "gift" from the US. Reports about deadly violence, erupted

in Baghdad, after Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr announced on Monday that he was quitting political life and closing his political offices, suddenly became the spotlight of the international community. Al-Sadr's supporters stormed Iraq's presidential palace the same day, and some fired rocket-propelled grenades into Green Zone, Baghdad. Also on Monday, the White House called for "dialogue" to ease the country's political problems.

On the surface, the unrest broke out because of a political deadlock since October last year, when Al-Sadr was confirmed the winner of the parliamentary election, yet has failed to form a new government until now. The US is the hidden hand that explains why the political struggle of Iraq comes to where it is today.

The US, which marched straight into Iraq as a "savior," left only a mess in the country. Washington first launched a war to almost destroy Iraq, then rebuilt the latter's political system with the so-called democracy. Yet instead of having peace and stability, Iraq today is still very much at war, with rising terrorism and sectarian violence.

According to a report by National Public Radio in 2021, after the 2003 invasion, the US-backed Iraqi Governing Council established a system of sectarian

apportionment and "this quota system divides cabinet roles and ministries and their resources between ethno-sectarian parties."

Yet this only led to escalating restraints and opposition among different forces, and more chaotic situation in Iraq. Since then, Iraq has had to face the rise of fierce confrontation among different ethnic, religious groups and political forces after each and every election, resulting in frequent difficult births of new governments. The clash on Monday was not the first one, and definitely not the last.

The scenario is not limited to Iraq, but occurs in many countries to which the US has delivered "democracy," said Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University. Observers generally believe that the Western system has made sectarian divisions and struggles in the Middle East much worse.

While the end of the Ukraine crisis is not yet in sight, a new conflict is emerging in Iraq. Both are "masterpieces" of the US. The causes of the two cases are different, yet both countries are suffering from consequences thanks to US strategic mistakes and its strong interference. Both face huge amounts of property damages, massive displacement of people and national decay.

Unfortunately, no power is holding the US accountable for all the chaos it created, be it in Iraq, or in other parts of the Middle East. In terms of security risks that Washington has brought to the region, all it knows is targeted military strikes, without ever considering local economic and social development. Granted, there is no Osama bin Laden or Ayman al-Zawahiri, but al-Qaeda still exist, hidden security dangers are thus far from being eliminated. All those lead to one conclusion – the failure of US-led global governance, said Liu.



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When people in China, Saudi Arabia, India, Russia, Brazil, etc. see US establishment say "we should defend rules-based order", what they hear is "we should defend US global primacy" which they want to change.

A Twitter user @EbrahimHashem commented on US "rules-based order"