

# Comment

editorials • opinion

CHINADAILY

中国日报

EDITORIALS

## Japan's growing rashness

TO ESCALATE TENSION WITH CHINA OVER Diaoyu Islands, Japan has chosen to play the same game twice this month. According to the Japanese media, Japan's Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba said on Tuesday that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton "had confirmed" that the "Senkaku" (Diaoyu) Islands fall within the scope of the US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security.

Two weeks earlier, an official from the US State Department was quoted by the Japanese media as having made similar remarks.

Whether Clinton and other US officials have actually said so is not important because neither Japanese nor US claims will alter the fact that the Diaoyu Islands have been part of Chinese territory since ancient times. Neither Japan nor the US is in a position to impose a bilateral security pact on or infringe upon the interests of a third party.

Yet it would be interesting to analyze why Japan has repeatedly made use of its security treaty with the US to shore up its unwarranted territorial claims over China's Diaoyu Islands.

The answer is simple: The 1960 US-Japan security treaty requires the US to defend Japan in the event of an armed conflict. Should the current dispute continue to escalate into a major conflict, Japan would be "justified" in evoking the treaty and asking for direct US involvement or even military intervention.

The necessity of countering China over the dispute has partly motivated Japan to strengthen its military alliance with the US. The arrival of a shipload of the US military's latest Osprey transport aircraft in Japan on Monday has been interpreted by the Japanese media as a potential move to help defend the islands.

On the other hand, establishing a stronger military presence in the region is seen as a necessary step in the US strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific.

It should be noted, too, that the US upholds its official line when it comes to territorial disputes. For example, the US State Department spokesman reiterated on July 9 that Washington does not take a position on the ultimate sovereignty of the islands.

Japan has taken advantage of the US ambiguity over the issue. The potential US support and its exhibition of war machinery in the region have in one way or another encouraged Japan to take one reckless move after another over the Diaoyu Islands this year, which will prove misguided.

## Labor test for policymakers

THE ASSURING JOB FIGURES RELEASED BY THE labor ministry on Wednesday testify to China's improving ability to create jobs even in times of economic slowdown.

In the first six months of this year, China generated 6.94 million jobs in urban areas, accounting for 77 percent of the annual target, says the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. But the urban unemployment rate remained unchanged during the period.

Considering the economy's condition which grew 7.6 percent in the second quarter year-on-year — the lowest quarterly growth since the second quarter of 2009 — the job data become even more comfortable. They indicate the Chinese economy has become more accommodating for labor, which is especially important for the most populous country.

But it does not mean policymakers can relax for a while. Despite the projected economic recovery in the second half, there are signs that the labor market remains tight in the short term.

Economists estimate that China's ratio of job vacancies to job applicants fell to 1.05 in the second quarter from 1.08 in the first, although it remained above the break-even point of 1 for the seventh consecutive quarter.

Moreover, media reports from Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, two traditional hubs of labor absorption, show that a large number of migrant workers have quit their jobs and returned to their rural homes. Economic downturn had affected the labor market similarly during the global financial crisis four years ago.

On the other hand, China's upcoming economic restructuring and demographic changes are set to add pressure on the labor market next year.

China has decided to give more importance to the quality of economic growth and is prepared to accept lower growth rates. Coupled with lingering global economic uncertainties caused by the ongoing eurozone financial woes, it means the job market will not improve much at least in the next one or two years.

China's demographic structure may add to the trouble in the coming decade. The aging trend has become ever more apparent and the number of young workers available is on the decline.

It would be a real task for policymakers to cope with labor supply shocks when the economic cycle is not in their favor.

### CONTACT US

**China Daily**  
15 Huxin Dongjie  
Chaoyang, Beijing 100029  
**News:**  
(86-10) 6491-8366  
editor@chinadaily.com.cn  
**Subscription:**  
(86) 400-699-0203  
sub@chinadaily.com.cn  
**Advertisement:**  
(86-10) 6491-8631  
ads@chinadaily.com.cn  
**Phone app:**  
chinadaily.com.cn/iphone

**China Daily USA**  
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800  
New York, NY 10036  
(001) 212 537 8888; editor@chinadailyusa.com

**China Daily Hong Kong**  
Room 1818, Hing Wai Centre  
7 Tin Wan Praya Road  
Aberdeen, Hong Kong  
(00852) 2518 5111; editor@chinadailyhk.com

**China Daily UK**  
90 Cannon Street  
London EC4N 6HA  
(0044) 0207 398 8270; editor@chinadailyuk.com

CHINA FORUM | ZHENG XIWEN

# Right to decide own future

## China supports Syrian people's freedom to choose leadership and opposes outside intervention to force regime change

China and Russia have come under fire again for vetoing a United Nations Security Council resolution, brokered by the West, on July 19 that would have paved the way for imposing sanctions on Syria.

As usual, the Western media have held China and Russia accountable for the escalating conflict in Syria. Susan Rice, US permanent representative to the UN, has criticized China and Russia, saying that "history will judge those that three times have blocked (Security) Council action quite harshly".

Despite the West's attempt to blame China and Russia, people can tell which countries are actually on the right side of history, act responsibly and truly care for the Syrian people.

As a responsible country, China has been consistent in its position and will never seek to fulfill its own interests on the Syrian issue by supporting or opposing anyone. Instead, China upholds justice and remains committed to maintaining peace and stability in Syria and the Middle East by adhering to the principles governing international relations.

Above all, China adheres to the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of Syria and opposes any foreign intervention in the meanwhile. Sovereign equality is a principle enshrined in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which is widely recognized as the foundation of modern international relations and also serves as the founding principle of the UN. Maintenance of international order and world peace and stability, to a great extent, depends on whether we stick to this principle.

Just as former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger wrote in an article earlier this year, intervention in the Syrian issue risks upsetting the global order. Noninterference in another country's internal affairs is an iron principle that should be abided by all nations to maintain global order.

Besides, China respects the independent choice of the Syrian people and opposes any outside attempt to forcibly promote regime change in Syria. A country's leadership should be decided by its own people, not by any outsider. There is no legitimate reason for any country or group of countries to decide the leadership of another country.

For a recent example we have to

look at Greece. Although the Greek turmoil worsened and threatened to touch off a domino effect across Europe, European Union leaders could not force leadership change in Greece. It was the Greek people who decided the country's fate through the ballot. Likewise, the fate of Syria is in the hands of its people, and China will respect any decision that is reached within that country and is supported by the Syrian people.

Moreover, China has always stressed that the Syrian issue should be resolved through political means and strongly opposes any military intervention. The Syrian crisis can only be resolved politically, not under outside military intervention.

Over the past decade, the US-led Western world has been preaching the notion of "human rights above sovereignty". The US launched wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and engineered a war to overthrow Muammar Gadhafi in Libya. In reality, what the US-led defense forces brought to these countries were deaths, destitution and humanitarian crises. The truth is, by emphasizing self-proclaimed efforts to promote democracy and protect human rights, the West is trying to eliminate dis-

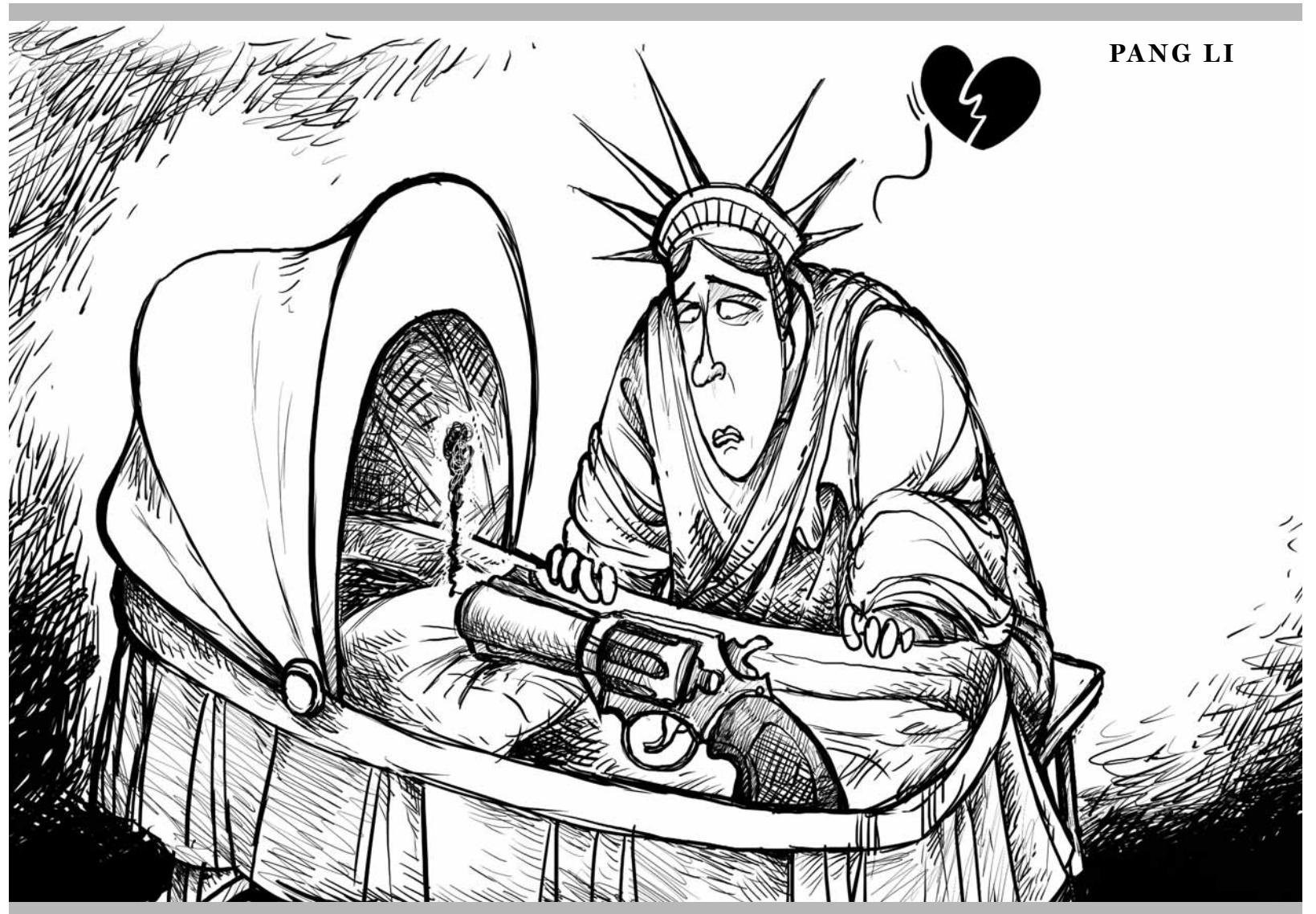
senting voices and fulfill its geopolitical interests.

The West is now resorting to the "Libyan model" to intervene in Syria and seek the UN Security Council's authorization for military intervention. It's for this reason that the US and its Western allies keep demonizing the Syrian government and supporting the Syrian opposition. Actually, the US and its allies should be held responsible for the prolonged unrest in Syria.

The good news is that the UN Security Council has passed a roll-over resolution that gives the UN Supervision Mission in Syria a final 30-day extension, which indicates that the Security Council is back on the "right track" of supporting UN-Arab League joint envoy Kofi Annan's mediation efforts in Syria and settling the Syrian crisis through political means.

The Syrian situation has entered a critical phase and the international community should urge all parties to give up violence to facilitate the establishment of long-term peace and stability in Syria and the Middle East.

The author is an international affairs analyst based in Beijing.



PANG LI

BAI PING

# Career in sports? Not so fast

My son, Haobo, always draws a small admiring crowd when he hits ball after ball onto the driving range.

On the practice green, spectators burst into laughter when Haobo, after tapping the ball into the cup, drops the putter to chase a butterfly or grasshopper. After all, he's just 3 years 4 months old.

Haobo's interest in golf started at 2 when he slammed the ball with a set of plastic golf clubs on the community playground. When he was taken to the driving range for the first time at 3, I was surprised to see the ease with which he lifted the ball off the mat and onto the turf.

"You should try to train your son to be a pro," a fellow golfer said. That has become a refrain with others.

Well, I may have many a dream for Haobo. But a golf pro, or a career in any other sports, isn't one of them. My instinctive concern is about the sacrifices that the family would have to make.

Andy Zhang, 14, the youngest US

Open competitor from the Chinese mainland, started playing golf at six and a half in Beijing and his mother had to give up her job two years later to take care of his training and participation in competitions in the United States.

Things looked easier at first for Feng Shanshan, 22, the first Chinese LPGA major winner who joined a junior golf team in Guangzhou at 10, because her father was a local sports official. But her parents had to spend their entire savings when she left for training in the US, and at one point, they even considered borrowing money by offering their only home as collateral.

About 100 young Chinese, supported by their families and agents, are reportedly training in the West. The tabs on board, training and competitions are anywhere between 500,000 yuan (\$78,000) and 1 million yuan a year, more expensive than going to a top medical or law school.

Then why don't they join the formidable Chinese national sports program that trains hundreds of thousands of children and teenagers every year for free? The system has produced legions of Olympic gold medalists.

Golfers in China are not like gymnasts or divers, who are respected for their long years of hard work and traditional dominance in their events. Golf has long been perceived as an elitist pastime of the moneyed class, a ruse for real estate developers and a potential threat to the natural environment.

Despite hastily assembled state teams that aim for the 2016 Rio Olympics where golf makes its debut, training young golfers remains largely the responsibility of parents.

Even if there are golf schools for children that are run like typical State-supported courses, middle-class parents, including better-off farmers, would be reluctant to let

their children give up a formal education and devote themselves to the kind of hardships that all past Chinese sports champions have endured. The heyday of the cradles of champions that ride on the support of poor families is over, with more people becoming affluent and more children taking sports as a hobby rather than a career.

Parents have to worry about what their children will do if they don't succeed. In golf, most players will end up selling balls or giving lessons at a club after failing to make the pro tour. Athletes in other sports can be far worse.

China retires thousands of career athletes each year, many of whom have difficulty finding a job because of lack of schooling and skills.

I hope my son will always be a recreational golfer, unless he turns out to be really, really good at it.

The writer is editor-at-large of China Daily. E-mail: dr.baiping@gmail.com