Defense Ministry criticizes US cancellation of RIMPAC invitation

2018-05-24

By Zhang Zhihao |   
 China Daily |  
 Updated: 2018-05-24 18:39

The United States' cancellation of China's invitation to the 2018 Rim of the Pacific Exercise is unconstructive and will not change China's intention to play a positive role in the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region, the Ministry of National Defense said on Thursday.  
The US had disregarded facts by sensationalizing China's so-called militarization of the South China Sea and had used it as an excuse on Wednesday to cancel China's invitation to the multilateral naval exercise, ministry spokesman Senior Colonel Ren Guoqiang said in a statement.  
Slamming the door on communication will not benefit mutual trust and cooperation in China-US military-to-military relations, he added.  
China has indisputable sovereignty over South China Sea islands and their surrounding waters, and deploying necessary defensive facilities on its own territory is a legitimate right of a sovereign nation, Ren said. They are necessary measures in safeguarding national sovereignty and maintaining regional peace and security, which have nothing to do with militarization, he said.  
He added that the US had no right to make irresponsible remarks regarding such activities.  
The cancellation of the invitation will not shake China's determination to protect its sovereignty and security interests, Ren said.  
Developing a healthy China-US military relationship is in the interests of both sides, and joint efforts are required to maintain it, he added.  
"We hope the US side can see the big picture, abandon its zero-sum mentality, resolve differences in an appropriate manner, and work hard to let the relationship between the two militaries become a stabilizing factor for China-US relations," Ren said.  
The first RIMPAC was held in 1971 as a joint maritime exercise between the US, Australia and Canada. It was held annually until 1974, when it became a biennial affair.  
China first participated in RIMPAC in 2014 and then again in 2016.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201805/24/WS5b06965ca31001b82571c1dd.html