Pentagon bashed for omitting PLA from RIMPAC

2018-05-25

By ZHANG ZHIHAO |   
 China Daily |  
 Updated: 2018-05-25 08:04

   
China slammed the Pentagon on Thursday for canceling the Chinese military's invitation to the 2018 Rim of the Pacific Exercise, calling the move rash, unconstructive and futile in changing China's determination to protect sovereignty and maintain regional peace and stability.  
The United States has disregarded facts and recently hyped China's so-called militarization of the South China Sea, and used it as an excuse to revoke China's invitation to the joint military exercise, Senior Colonel Ren Guoqiang, a Defense Ministry spokesman, said in an online statement on Thursday.  
Slamming shut the door of interaction will not benefit mutual trust and cooperation in Sino-US military-to-military relations under any circumstances, he added.  
On Wednesday, the Pentagon canceled China's invitation this year by claiming to have "strong evidence" that China has deployed military hardware, including missiles, electronic jammers and bombers, in the South China Sea.  
Ren said China's deployment of necessary defense facilities on its own territory is a legitimate right of a sovereign nation, and the US has no right to make irresponsible remarks regarding these activities.  
The Pentagon's move will not change China's will to play a positive role in maintaining Asia-Pacific regional peace and security, nor it will shake China's determination to protect its own sovereignty and security interests, he said.  
Ren urged the US to abandon its zero-sum mentality, resolve differences in an appropriate manner and make the relations between the two militaries a stabilizing factor in Sino-US ties.  
Lu Kang, Foreign Ministry spokesman, said on Thursday that it is futile and impractical for the US to use a single event to try to force China to relinquish its inherent rights.  
The first RIMPAC was held in 1971 as a joint exercise between the US, Australia and Canada. China first participated in 2014, and received invitations from the US in 2016 and 2018.  
In 2016, then US secretary of defense Ash Carter said the US would not revoke China's invitation despite the tension over the South China Sea.  
Teng Jianqun, director of the Department for American Studies at the China Institute of International Studies, said behind the canceled invitation is the Trump administration's attempts to look tough on China before the upcoming midterm elections and US fears that China's growing military presence in the sea will undermine its influence in the region.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201805/25/WS5b075318a31001b82571c2fd.html