

## 《Beijing defends sovereignty at sea》

### Foreign Ministry says US, Japan out of line in comments about Nansha Islands

China strongly opposes irresponsible remarks concerning China made by the defense ministers of the United States and Japan at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said on Sunday.

Hua Chunying said in a news release published on the ministry's website that China has indisputable sovereignty of the Nansha Islands and its surrounding waters and has been consistently seeking to peacefully resolve disputes through negotiations and discussions.

She reiterated that China strongly opposes some nations' flexing their military muscles and threatening and challenging China's sovereignty and the safety in the South China Sea under the guise of freedom of navigation and flight. The spokeswoman also said it is China's genuine and lawful right to deploy necessary defense facilities on its own islands and reefs in the South China Sea.

Hua urged some "nations outside the region" to stop making irresponsible remarks, to respect efforts at safeguarding the peace and stability in the South China Sea and to play a constructive role in this regard.

Her remarks were in response to a question on how China views the comments about China from US Defense Secretary James Mattis and Tomomi Inada, Japan's defense minister, at the Shangri-La Dialogue that concluded on Sunday afternoon.

Mattis and Inada accused China of disregarding "rules-based order" and creating tensions in their addresses made during the event.

This year's Shangri-La Dialogue, also called the 16th Asia Security Summit and held by the London-based think tank International Institute for Strategic Studies, was attended by 22 ministerial-level delegates and 12 chiefs of defense departments, as well as senior military officials and academics from 39 countries and regions.

The People's Liberation Army delegation to the Shangri-La Dialogue also made clear the Chinese military's pursuit of common security and its commitment to peaceful means to address disputes in the Asia-Pacific region, PLA researchers attending the event said.

Zhou Bo, director of the security cooperation center under the Defense Ministry's Office for International Military Cooperation, said on Sunday representatives from the PLA clearly and comprehensively explained China's stances toward issues concerning the East and South China seas and exposed some nations' real intentions.

"I told the audience to a special session that China made a national law to ensure the lawful use of waterways nearly 20 years ago and that some countries have been condemning China for compromising 'freedom of navigation' even as they themselves refuse to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea," Zhou said.

Chinese delegates also reminded participants that despite the PLA's constantly improving capabilities in the past decades, it has never taken advantage of its strength to stir up trouble outside the country's borders, he added.

"Moreover, we updated the attendees on our efforts and achievements in building mutual trust as well as boosting communication and exchange," Zhou said.

Lieutenant General He Lei, vice-president of the PLA Academy of Military Science and head of the PLA delegation, told the audience on Saturday that China is always committed to resolving international disputes through peaceful negotiations and opposes to the use or threat of force.

He said China has always held that countries, big or small, are equal and issues should be settled through consultation on the basis of equality. On the South China Sea issue, China insists on peacefully resolving disputes through negotiation and consultation by countries directly involved. China will also work with ASEAN to uphold peace and stability in the region, He said.

