

PLA 'does not want war', but is not afraid of one

The People's Liberation Army does not want a war in the South China Sea, but will not be afraid of one if it knocks on China's door, the military has said.

An editorial published on Tuesday on the PLA Daily's website said the Chinese military is not afraid of "demons" and "intimidation", adding that the PLA dares to "show its sword" and has a proven record of safeguarding national interests.

It invoked China's determination and victory in the Korean War as well as the Chinese government's warning toward the United States' escalation in the 1960s during the Vietnam War.

"In the past, the PLA produced numerous miracles in wars, despite being outnumbered by enemies or having inferior weapons compared with those of its adversaries. Today, our troops are well equipped and high-spirited ... Facing risk-takers, the PLA, which owns DF series ballistic missiles, will show them that we are ready for a war and we do not fear wars," the article said.

In another article published on the same website on Wednesday, the writer blasted "some US politicians" for believing that lasting superiority over China and the Asia-Pacific will ensure the US' "global leadership", saying that playing tricks with China in the South China Sea is unreasonable and dangerous.

The article also suggests that the US should focus on its domestic issues instead of "interfering elsewhere" if it wishes to become "great again".

The articles came after recent claims from senior US officials threatening to take hard-line measures against China over issues relating to the South China Sea.

Shao Yongling, a professor of military strategy at the PLA Rocket Force Command College, told China Daily that the remarks show the Chinese military's determination and capability of safeguarding the country's sovereignty and interests anywhere.

"They also show that we are well prepared for contingencies. I believe these remarks are more like warnings than threats. They aim at telling the US that we will not tolerate negative actions that compromise our interests," she said.

Shao added that the PLA Rocket Force will definitely be mobilized if there is a large joint operation in the South China Sea and that Chinese ballistic missiles are capable of covering all of the sea.

Li Li, a military equipment expert at PLA National Defense University, said

recent moves by the US, such as sending the littoral combat ship USS Coronado to the South China Sea, indicate that the new US government will not relax its interference in the region and it does not want to see the recent improvement in relations between China and other nations in the region.

“However, no matter what measures the US plans to take, we will never abandon our sovereignty, interests and rights in the South China Sea,” she said.

Yang Xiyu, a researcher of Asia-Pacific security affairs at the China Institute of International Studies in Beijing, told China Central Television that some US politicians are hoping that military pressure will intimidate China in the South China Sea, but this has repeatedly turned out to be useless.

He said that the stronger the PLA is, the less willing the US will be to launch a war against China.