

Would doubts the leadership of Uncle Sam: expert

Source: People's Daily

As the US has lost more international status and influence since the global financial crisis in 2008, the international community is raising doubts about its leadership and ability to contribute to the world, an expert said, analyzing that such a decline of influence can be attributed to some deep-seated reasons, including its self-willed overseas military operations.

Since the financial crisis, the US can neither provide effective solutions to a host of global challenges, nor sustain its control over other countries, Zhang Ruizhuang, Director of the Center of American Studies at Nankai University, wrote in an article published in the People's Daily on Sunday.

In the commentary titled "The City upon a Hill is not there any more," he gave an in-depth analysis on the reasons of such changes.

Zhang says that "A City upon a Hill," often cited by American politicians as their political creed, verified the self-labelling of the arrogant Americans as "God's Chosen Ones" to lead the world. After the Cold War, the preaching about the superiority of its values brought US much popularity and pulled the country to a commanding stage.

But it over-consumed its accumulated political capital during the last quarter of the 20th century, which resulted in a decline in its global influence, Zhang said, adding that the most destructive threat to its dropping status can be attributed to overseas military operations.

After the Soviet Union collapsed with the end of the Cold War, the US dominated the world and launched a series of capricious measures. With the excuse of protecting democracy, human rights and the world order, Uncle Sam trampled on the post-war international law based on the UN Charter and norms governing global relations by bringing the flames of war to many parts of the world.

Panama, Somalia, Haiti and Kosovo are all victims of such wars waged by the superpower. With a made-up excuse, it pulled Iraq into a war and this political farce finally brought the latter millions of civilian casualties, endless terrorist attacks and ceaseless disturbance.

What the US gained, after it paid a price of trillions of dollars for the war, was a hotbed for terrorist organizations which in turn threatened the security of itself and other Western countries. The war against Iraq ultimately turned out to be a foolish one that not only crumbled its diplomatic morality, but undermined its own strategic interests, Zhang concluded.

Despite the lessons, the US never gave up every opportunity to start "color revolutions." Its attacks on Libya and Syria, once again, dragged these nations into raging wars. What's worse, as a result of the wars, a number of regulation vacuums provided ISIS and other religious extremist

organizations a bed in which to grow stronger.

The US, its Western allies, as well as the whole world, are now swallowing the sour fruits resulted from its self-willed deed, he added.

According to the scholar, apart from its frequent diplomatic mistakes, its economy, politics and society, in which the Americans once took pride, are all in a predicament, arising more doubts over the superiority of the US system.

The global financial crisis breaking out in 2008 exposed the defects of capitalism once again. It brought to light not only the failure of Keynesian policy to narrow the wealth gap and boost effective demand, but the greed and corruption of financial executives, the ineffectiveness of financial supervision, plus the government's shielding of tycoons.

The US public felt shock, despair and anger towards such defects, and the ensuing "Occupy Wall Street" movement is one of their ways to express dissatisfaction. The protest wave later spilled to other part of the world, triggering worldwide query over the US system and its values.

Zhang also criticized US domestic politics, citing its notorious presidential election system as an example.

Manipulated by capital, the "winner takes all" election system in many states gives no chance to other newborn parties besides the two major parties. The American elections of the past two to three decades have been more like technical games.

The candidates now focus more on technical details for the sake of more votes rather than their political ideas and governance philosophies, and the whole process has fallen into personal attacks between the two candidates, he added.

Coupled with some other faults, the US and even the whole world began to question on the effectiveness of US democracy, as well as its leader selected in such a flawed way.

The article analyzed that one key reason for its flopping election lies in a lack of innovative governing ideas.

Barely stimulated by major crisis, US society tends to be mediocre and conservative about its ideas, the commentary further explained, adding that the prevailing philosophy of so-called "political correctness" also created an unfavorable environment for the candidates to come up with new ideas acceptable to the public.

Lack of foresighted candidates with outstanding capability is another reason for its unsuccessful election, Zhang wrote.

He explained that some capable politicians are not willing to embarrass themselves on the election

stage at the cost of their privacy and that of their family as the butt of jokes.

“As a result, the world was presented with an election farce performed by the two unqualified and big-mouth candidates selected by the two parties,” the author concluded.

“It is obvious that the US is seeing a decline in terms of both prestige and influence, but such a drop is not so eye-catching as it has no strong competitors yet. It would be a complicated historic path,” the scholar said, calling for more attention to the course of the world pattern.