

Study on the Situation between France and the South China Sea from the Perspective of Balance of Power Theory

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Abstract : With the rise of China and the escalation of tension between China and the United States, European countries led by Great Britain, France, and Germany pay increasing attention to the regional situation in the Asia-Pacific (now known as "Indo-Pacific"). Among them, the South China Sea (SCS) is one of the main areas disputed by China, the United States, Southeast Asian countries and some European countries. Western countries are worried that the rise of China's military power will break the stability of the situation in SCS and alter the balance of power among major powers. Therefore, they tried to balance China's rise through alliance. In France's Indo-Pacific strategy, France aims to build a regional order with the alliance of France, India and Australia as the core, and regularly carry out military exercises targeting SCS with the United States, Japan and Southeast Asian countries. For China, the instability of the situation in SCS could also threaten the security of the southeast coastal areas and Taiwan, affect China's peaceful development process, and pose a threat to China's territorial sovereignty. This paper aims to study the activities and motivation of France in the South China Sea, and put the situation in SCS under the perspective of Balance of Power Theory, focusing on China, America and France. To be more specific, this paper will first briefly introduce Balance of Power Theory, then describe the new trends of France in recent years, followed with the analysis on the motivation of the increasing trend of France's involvement in SCS, and finally analyze the situation in SCS from the perspective of "balance of power" theory. It will be argued that great powers are carefully maintaining the balance of military power in SCS, and it is highly possible that this trend would still last in the middle and long term, particularly via military deployment and strategic alliances.

Keywords : South China Sea, France, China, balance of power theory, Indo-Pacific

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