

US “Maximum pressure” From the Perspective of Bottom-Line Thinking—Taking the Persian Gulf Escort Coalition as an Example

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This article attempts to take the formation of the Persian Gulf Escort Coalition after the oil tanker attack and detention as the starting point to discuss the bottom-line thinking of the parties involved in and the dilemma of US “maximum pressure”. The “maximum pressure” is the product of zero-sum thinking. In the case of “maximum pressure”, the allies may predict the worst outcome out of bottom-line thinking, which will change their support for the US, resulting in not only being unable to isolate their opponents, but also isolating the US itself. And in the case of “maximum pressure”, the opponent will also prepare for the worst out of bottom-line thinking, which will easily make the contradictions more intensified and cause unnecessary strong backlash from the opponent. Under the guidance of bottom-line thinking, out of consideration of history or other factors, allies or opponents may make choices that are different from expectations, leading to the risk of strategic-misjudgment. In summary, the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf was an unsuccessful act of “maximum pressure”, and the “maximum pressure” strategy that time did not achieve the expected results because of the bottom-line thinking of the allies.

Keywords: Bottom line thinking, Persian Gulf Escort Coalition

Bottom line thinking is a way of thinking that accepts the worst results, which guides the actors to consider the worst possible situation, and prepare and respond to it. In recent years, the US has continued to exert “maximum pressure” on Iran. After it officially announced its withdrawal from the nuclear agreement, the US resumed its economic sanctions against Iran. Among them, sanctions on Iranian oil exports hit the lifeblood of Iran’s economy. At the same time, the US has continued to increase its pressure on Iran in other areas, including accusing Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization and adding troops to the Middle East. In the process of US “maximum pressure”, all actors involved have chosen different behaviors based on their bottom line thinking. After successive attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf region, the regional situation has become even more complicated. Therefore, this article attempts to take the formation of the Persian Gulf Escort Coalition after the oil tanker attack and detention as the starting point to discuss the bottom-line thinking of the parties involved in and the dilemma of US “maximum pressure”.

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Forming a Persian Gulf Escort Coalition—An Attempt to Exert "Maximum pressure"

The Persian Gulf Escort Coalition was proposed by the US in July 2019, through which the US hopes to realize the concept of maritime security guarantee. In the US expectation, this coalition will be led by the US, but actual actions mainly rely on the participation of the member states of the coalition. The apparent goal of forming this coalition is to ensure the safety of important waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Mandé, and the Gulf of Oman. The more important thing is to counter what it sees as a renewed maritime threat from Iran (Gambrell, 2019).

The direct background for the formation of the Persian Gulf Escort Coalition was the time of frequent oil tankers attacks and hijackings in the Strait of Hormuz and its surrounding waters. On May 12, 2019, a number of explosions occurred in the Fujairah Port of the UAE, which is adjacent to the Strait of Hormuz, causing a fire on seven to 10 oil tankers and four ships were stuck. Of the four commercial ships targeted in the May 12 attack, one was flying a UAE flag, two were tankers owned by Saudi Arabia, and the fourth was a Norwegian tanker (Roth, 2019). Later in June 13, two tankers were apparently attacked in the Gulf of Oman in international waters near the Strait of Hormuz. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blamed Iran for the attacks, saying the assessment was based on intelligence but offered no evidence to support his claim, while Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said "suspicious doesn't begin to describe" (Cotovio, Regan, & Fox, 2019). On July 4, the Gibraltar government said its law enforcement agencies and the Royal Marines had detained Iranian Grace 1 in the Strait of Gibraltar, alleging the vessel was headed to the Banyas Refinery which belongs to an entity subject to the EU sanctions against Syria. However, Iran denied the allegations, saying its navy vessels carried out their regular patrolling missions in the Gulf (Xinhua News Agency, 2019). The detention was originally for two weeks, but the detention period was extended again. In response, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards seized the British oil tanker, Stena Impero, for failing to respect the international maritime rules while passing through the Strait of Hormuz. After these incidents, the situation surrounding the Persian Gulf continued to enter a white-hot stage, and the US sent thousands of additional troops, an aircraft carrier, B-52 bombers and advanced fighter jets to the region as tensions with Iran rise. Facing the US military deterrence, Iran's attitude is equally tough. Against such backdrop, the US announced that it hopes to form the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf to ensure the safety of navigation in the surrounding waters.

The development from the oil tankers incidents to the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf is an important practice of the US policy of "maximum pressure". In the process of forming the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, the US has taken several key measures to exert "maximum pressure":

First, prompt the incident to escalate. After the 6.13 Fujairah tanker bombing, US Secretary of State Pompeo quickly claimed that Iran was responsible for launching the tanker attack in the Gulf of Oman. Then US National Security Adviser John Bolton has said that Iran was "almost certainly" behind the attacks. The US Central Command released a grainy video which it said showed an Iranian patrol boat "removing the unexploded limpet mine" from the ship (China Daily, 2019), but even Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous, owner of the vessel also expressed there is no claim of responsibility for the blasts. In a number of oil tanker incidents, the US tried its best to link the incidents with Iran, and expanded the impact of the incident in various ways to promote the escalation of the incident. Its attitude was even stronger than that of allies whose oil tankers were directly attacked or detained, in order to provide reasons for further pressure.

Second, bundle related topics together. In the process of responding to the oil tanker attacks and detentions and calling for the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, the main goal of the US is to deal with potential threats from Iran. However, in its external propaganda, the establishment of the Escort Coalition was tied to issues such as the safety of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the freedom of global oil shipping routes, and the energy security of the Middle East, to urge allies to join. At the same time, the US has also linked economic sanctions with the incidents as an opportunity to further increase pressure on Iran. Such bundling related topic is one of the most important means of exerting "maximum pressure".

Third, win over "stakeholders". After the oil tanker attacks and detentions, the US quickly put forward a proposal for the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf. There are a large number of oil-producing countries around the Persian Gulf, and the Strait of Hormuz is an important oil export transportation channel for Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, and other countries. It is just 33-kilometer wide at its narrowest point, but guards the main artery of global oil resources. It is the only place to pass from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean. Therefore, after linking the safety of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz with the threat of Iran, the US hopes to expand the influence of the global anti-Iran camp by winning over stakeholders who are involved in the safety of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz to counter Iran together.

Fourth, test Iran's resilience repeatedly. In the process of promoting the escalation of tanker attacks, the US has continued to speak harshly and even strengthened its military deterrence to test Iran's resilience. Such repeated probing measures are also among most important means of exerting "maximum pressure".

However, due to the apparent anti-Iranian nature of the Escort Coalition described by the US, its establishment may bring some risks. In this case, it is easy to arouse the bottom-line thinking of stakeholders, leading to the failure of "maximum pressure" behavior in forming the coalition.

Inconsistent Bottom-Line of the Allies—Failure of the Maximum-Pressure Attempt

After the US launched the initiative on Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, the various parties reacted differently. In the plan of the US, the Escort Coalition is jointly participated by more than 60 countries, among which the US is mainly responsible for intelligence sharing, and allies are responsible for specific escort missions. But allies reacted various to the initiative. First of all, the US as the country that proposes and plays a leading role, has limited substantive contributions to the coalition. Secondly, the anti-Iranian nature of the coalition is obvious, which may easily intensify regional conflicts. Finally, and most importantly, the formation of the Escort Coalition is not entirely consistent with the individual interests of all allies.

In such a case, countries at different levels are also different in terms of their actual benefits that the coalition may bring and the risks that allies may need to bear, leading to different bottom-line thinking among allies. Under the influence of bottom-line thinking, the decisions made by various actors are mainly based on the worst situation they anticipate and the different bottom-line they can bear. In the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, inconsistent bottom-line thinking led to different choices among different allies.

Power Allies Outside the Region: Take Britain and Germany as Examples

Allies of powers outside the Middle East have doubts on the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf as a whole. However, under the doubt, according to the difference between the preset bottom line and the acceptable

bottom line of different countries, the choices of these powers are different, like the Britain and Germany have made different decisions on whether to join the Escort Coalition.

The bottom line of the UK is based on the inertia of pro-American diplomacy, the freedom of the navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and its balanced national interests. In the process of forming the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, the Britain was directly involved in the detention of the oil tanker in Strait of Hormuz. In early July 2019, the authorities of Gibraltar detained Iranian boat with the assistance of the British Navy, and subsequently, Iran took retaliatory arrest of British oil tanker passing through the Strait of Hormuz, leading to an escalation of incidents. In the incident of the mutual detention of oil tankers, the British side's attitude was more eased. British side said that Britain would facilitate the release of the detained Grace 1 oil tanker if Tehran gave guarantees it would not go to Syria. Gibraltar local government also said it was seeking to de-escalate tensions arising with Iran since the detention. Even after Iran seized the British tanker, Britain insisted on releasing the Iranian tanker. It can be seen that in this incident, the British side does not want the situation to escalate, which is contrary to the expectations of the US.

Britain's interests in the Strait of Hormuz is to ensure the safety and free navigation of the waterways, but the possible regional conflicts induced for this reason are to cross the bottom line that Britain can bear. Therefore, when the US proposed to form an Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, London's response was relatively indifferent. Although the Britain sent two warships to the Persian Gulf that month, London emphasized that the move was for the safety of British oil tankers, rather than responding to the call of the US. For London, the formation of an escort coalition is necessary, but the coalition should not have the nature of obviously opposing Iran or intensifying contradictions. Therefore, in order to ensure the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the Britain calls on the EU to establish a joint fleet and conduct a European-led escort operation in the Persian Gulf, which won the support from countries such as France, Italy, and Denmark. However, due to the unsuccessful advancement of European-led escort activities and the differences in the UK on whether to follow the US to join the escort coalition, London finally announced on August 5, 2019 that it officially joined the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf initiated by the US. For London, joining the US-led Escort Coalition is the result of the balance and compromise of three factors: the inertia of pro-American diplomacy in the UK, the bottom line to protect the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, and the failure to establish and lead the European escort fleet.

Compared with Britain's hesitation, Germany, which is also an US ally outside the Middle East, has a clearer bottom line. After the US proposed the formation of the Escort Coalition, senior German officials expressed in an interview that they were very skeptical of the US proposal, because the urgent task should be to avoid conflicts, and the escort operation risks may further aggravating the situation. For US powerful allies outside the Middle East, they are stakeholders in protecting the safety of navigation in the Persian Gulf, but the risk of being involved in regional conflicts following the US is far greater than the risk that its oil tankers may encounter in the Persian Gulf waterway, because the former situation may lead to the worst possible situation beyond their acceptable bottom lines. Therefore, these powers are generally skeptical of the Escort Coalition.

Small Allies Outside the Region: Take Japan and Poland as Examples

Compared with power allies outside the region outside the region, the allies of the small countries outside the region obviously do not have that high diplomatic autonomy, but their ability to withstand the possible

bottom-line situation is even worse. Therefore, as to whether to join in the Persian Gulf initiated by the US, the decision of allies of small countries outside the region is mainly based on their own interests.

Japan's response to the Escort Coalition was not positive. Japan is an important oil importer in the international community, and oil from the Middle East accounts for an important proportion of Japan's total oil imports. Therefore, the normal passage of the Strait of Hormuz is vital to the safety of Japan's energy lines. The relationship between Japan and Iran has always been relatively close. Iran was once Japan's largest trading partner in the Middle East, and Japan has always been a communication channel between the Western camp and Iran. After the Gulf War and the Cold War, as the US began to impose sanctions on Iran, Japan's oil imports from Iran gradually decreased, and the business exchanges between Japan and Iran were also significantly affected. But although Iran's share is getting lower and lower, the Gulf region is still the most important source of Japan's oil imports. However, as some ally outside the Middle East, although Japan is diplomatically pro-American and is also a stakeholder in the safety of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, it anticipates the worst possible situations that the Persian Gulf Escort Alliance may cause: Firstly, the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf will seriously affect the relationship between Japan and Iran. If Japan joins the coalition, it will not only be unable to serve as a link between the West and Iran, but it may also incur retaliatory activities against Japanese boats in the Strait of Hormuz by Iran. Secondly, according to Japan's 1947 Peace Constitution, Japan cannot have an army, only the Japan Self-Defense Force. If Japan sends its Self-Defense Forces to the Persian Gulf waters and participates in an escort coalition that is clearly opposed to Iran, the move will cause strong opposition from both the international community and Japan's domestic society. Out of concerns about the worst possible situation, Japan did not join the Escort Coalition. Even after the Japanese oil tanker was attacked during Japanese Prime Minister Abe's visit to Iran, it did not agree with the accusation made by the US that Iran was involved in the attack.

Also as a small country outside the Middle East, Poland's attitude is slightly different from that of Japan, because Poland government's bottom line and its priority were to maintain the legitimacy of the government. After the US initiated to establish an escort coalition, when many countries expressed doubts, the Polish Foreign Minister expressed that Poland was willing to join this coalition in any form. This decision was made at the time by the domestic political situation in Poland. Poland's accession to the EU is an important result of the EU's eastward expansion, but when the escort coalition was formed in 2019, Poland's ruling party was the right-wing conservative party Law and Justice Party (PiS). The PiS has always been skeptical about European integration, and it has even argued that Poland needs to recoup some of its sovereignty and to be more assertive in defending its national interests (Foy & Robinson, 2016). Since the PiS took over the Polish government, it has repeatedly emphasized that Poland and Germany still have unpaid war arrears, its relationship with Germany has deteriorated, and it seeks to withdraw politically from the EU and strengthen relations with the US. For Poland, the country's crude oil imports that year were mainly from Russia rather than the Middle East. Although Poland had recently begun to seek diversification of its own energy sources and signed a long-term agreement with Saudi Aramco before the tanker attacks, the generally the country's tankers are unlikely to encounter risks in the Strait of Hormuz. For the ruling party PiS, it is the government's bottom line to adhere to the party's consistent pro-US and exit-EU diplomatic policy and maintain the legitimacy of the current ruling. Under the influence of this bottom-line thinking, Poland's response to the formation of the Persian Gulf Escort Alliance by the United States has been relatively positive.

From the perspective of bottom-line thinking, for small allies outside the Middle East, whether or not they choose to join the Escort Coalition is based on their own national interests. Because small countries have a low stake in the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and weak ability in resisting risks, they are more inclined to make a cautious and prudent diplomatic choice. And for small countries outside the region, the political significance of joining the Escort Coalition is far greater than its military significance. If a small country chooses to join the Escort Coalition and is targeted by Iran as a result, it is in fact difficult for the coalition to provide adequate shelter for the small country's tankers.

Regional Allies: Taking Saudi Arabia and Israel as Examples

Unlike countries outside the region, US allies within the Middle East have more tangible interests in the Strait of Hormuz, so the response of regional allies was much more positive.

The bottom line of Saudi Arabia was to contain any possible development of Iran. On September 18, 2019, Saudi Arabia announced that it would join the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf initiated by the US, saying that this was to express support for the international community's efforts to contain the threat of maritime navigation and global trade. Before Saudi Arabia announced its accession, the two oil facilities of Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil company, caught fire after being attacked by drones. The Houthis in Yemen expressed responsibility for it. Although the Houthis have released relevant evidence, the Saudis have always believed that the attack has a lot to do with Iran. Saudi Arabia and Iran are both regional powers, and the two sides have always had differences on sectarian issues, ethnic issues, and political systems, and there is also a competitive relationship between them in the energy market. As the geopolitical tension between the two countries intensifies, do everything possible to prevent the development of Iran from becoming Saudi Arabia's primary goal. If Iran is not contained in the Strait of Hormuz, Iran may get a respite and develop, which is the worst situation that Saudi Arabia cannot accept. In order to prevent this situation from taking place, Saudi Arabia did not hesitate to compromise in other areas, and even contacted Israel to jointly oppose Iran. In addition, with the reorganization of different camps in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia urgently needs the support of the US. Therefore, under the influence of the bottom line thinking of preventing Iran's development, Saudi Arabia has a very positive attitude towards a Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia hopes to use the influence of the US taking the formation of the coalition as an opportunity to jointly build a global alliance against Iran.

Like Saudi Arabia, another country that actively participates in the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf is Israel, which is also in the Middle East. Israel's bottom line is its survival in the region. After Britain, Israel became the second country to participate in the Escort Coalition and the first regional country to announce its membership in the coalition. There have been many years of grievances between Israel and Iran. In recent years, the two sides have also had frictions on many occasions. Israel regards Iran as the biggest threat to its own development. It has been accusing Iran of expanding its power in the Middle East and turning Syria into a forward position against Israel. In order to contain Iran's development to the greatest extent, Israel has also tried to persuade the US to withdraw from the Iran nuclear agreement. For Israel, its most important bottom line is its own survival security, and any factors that may threaten Israel's survival security must be eliminated in advance. Therefore, Israel's demand to contain Iran is even more urgent than that of the US. From Israeli perspective, joining the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf may lead to a retaliatory attack by Iran, but such attacks have occurred many times before, so it will be a situation that Israel is fully acceptable and capable of

responding to. And after Israel joins the Escort Coalition, it will mainly provide intelligence rather than actual escort support. Therefore, under the influence of such bottom-line thinking, it is not surprising that Israel joined the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf without hesitation.

It can be found that the regional allies are directly related to the safety of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, and there is a consensus among these allies with the US on containing Iran. Joining the Escort Coalition meets the actual interests of these countries and will not have an unacceptable impact on the current regional security from their perspectives. Under such circumstances, regional allies generally supported the US initiative to form an Escort Coalition.

To sum up, with regard to the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, the bottom line and needs of the US allies at all levels are different, so the decisions they make are also various. That's why after the US proposed the initiative, the reaction of many allies was relatively indifferent, and only a few allies actively joined. This is mainly a decision made by countries after considering their own national interests and estimating whether the worst possible scenario will break through their own bottom line. In this case, the formation of the escort coalition finally is no longer concerned.

Stalemate Between Bottom-Line Thinking and "Maximum pressure"—US-Iran Confrontation in the Tanker Incidents

The "maximum pressure" strategy first appeared in the former US President Trump's North Korea policy. In 2017, the US abandoned the strategic tolerance strategy of the Obama era and began to exert "maximum pressure" on North Korea. According to US media reports, the "maximum pressure" is divided into two parts: The first step is to use all diplomatic, military, economic, and other means to put pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programs. The second step is that if North Korea accepts negotiations with the goal of nuclear abandonment, the US will start a dialogue with it directly. Judging from the development of the situation, the US has indeed met its original expectations. Under "maximum pressure", North Korea finally changed its views and agreed to engage with the US with the goal of nuclear abandonment. Then, the US also chose a strategy of "maximum pressure" on the Iran issue, hoping to use pressure to promote change inside Iran. Therefore, after frequent incidents of oil tankers being attacked or detained in the Persian Gulf, the US chose to use this as an entry point to further exert "maximum pressure" on Iran. Looking at the process of the US "maximum pressure" policy from the occurrence of the tanker incidents to the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, its "maximum pressure" is exerted in progressive:

First, establish goals and predict the situation. Former US President Trump has always made "maximum pressure" the key to his new Middle East policy. After the oil tanker incidents, the US quickly linked the incidents with Iran, hoping to take this opportunity to gain control of the Strait of Hormuz and increase pressure on Iran. US decision-making is mainly based on two pre-judgments: The first is that Iran guards the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz, and its existence threatens the safety of the channel of the Strait of Hormuz, so the strait needs to be guarded; the second is that when the incidents escalate, allies may clash with Iran in the Strait of Hormuz, which will increase Iran's diplomatic pressure. However, whether in fact or in the assessment of allies outside the region, Iran's threat to the Strait of Hormuz is not that great. Although both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have opened pipelines that bypass the Strait of Hormuz, Kuwait, Qatar, and other Gulf countries still rely on the Strait of Hormuz to export oil and natural gas. During the years that Iran has controlled the entrance to the strait, there has been no interruption of the crossing route. Instead, many explosions and attacks mainly

occurred after the US withdrew from the Iran nuclear agreement. Therefore, the allies worry that if the escort coalition is successfully formed, the security environment in the sea area may further deteriorate.

Second, put great pressure on a single goal. In the process of forming the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf, the US hopes to exert multiple pressures on Iran. Therefore, while the US continued to promote the escalation of the situation, exaggerated provocative words, and sent armed forces to the Persian Gulf, it also calls on all stakeholders involved in the security of the Strait of Hormuz to join. However, the pressure exerted by the US itself is not sufficient enough to promote change in Iran. The key to "maximum pressure" is based on its own monopoly on superior resources to make the other party know that it could no longer maintain the status quo. However, in these incidents, Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz is difficult to shake, and even if the US obtains control of the Strait of Hormuz, it has not enough capability to maintain the security of the strait. Currently, the accident of any US aircraft carrier on global cruises will cause huge financial losses. The US is unable to maintain sufficient military power to cruise in the Strait of Hormuz, and what it could do is just cruising with its allies. So the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf is proposed by the US, but is designed to be undertaken by allies, for US decreasing of capability.

Third, win over external forces to exert multiple pressures. As mentioned above, the US plan to win over external forces to jointly exert pressure was frustrated. Due to the inconsistent bottom-line thinking of allies, the US was unable to achieve diplomatic isolation of Iran. In the case of unable to win over external forces to exert pressure, the pressure the opponent faced is insufficient, causing the front to be dragged too long, and the effectiveness of the "maximum pressure" strategy would be greatly affected.

Generally speaking, it is difficult for the US to achieve a balance of three aspects with the "maximum pressure" to build an escort coalition: First, the balance between exerting "maximum pressure" and avoiding large-scale conflicts. The formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf further intensified the situation in the Persian Gulf, but the US does not have a feasible plan to deal with possible regional conflicts, nor is it enough capability to deal with it. Moreover, regional conflicts are not in the interests of some allies. Avoiding regional conflicts is the bottom line that some allies of major powers outside the region are unwilling to cross. Second, the balance between the interests of the US and the interests of allies. In recent years, under the guidance of pragmatism, the support of allies needed by the US has increasingly shifted from legal support to practical support. The US has even actively weakened its dominant position in regional security supply, which has also been reflected its position in the shaping of the security order in the Gulf region. Under such circumstances, the divergence between the interests of the US and the interests of allies has gradually increased, resulting in a decline in the US influence over allies and a decline in the credibility of its security commitments. Third, the balance between maximizing the pressure and minimizing the possible consequences brought by the opponent's bottom line thinking. If the possible results of the US's "maximum pressure" exceed the bottom line acceptable to Tehran, Tehran may take tough measures under the influence of bottom line thinking, adding uncertainty to the regional security environment.

The so-called "maximum pressure" is the product of zero-sum thinking. In the case of "maximum pressure", the allies may predict the worst outcome out of bottom-line thinking, which will change their support for the US, resulting in not only being unable to isolate their opponents, but also isolating the US itself. In the case of "maximum pressure", the opponent will also prepare for the worst out of bottom-line thinking, which will easily make the contradictions more intensified and cause unnecessary strong backlash from the opponent. Under the guidance of bottom-line thinking, out of consideration of history or other factors, allies or opponents

may make choices that are different from expectations, leading to the risk of strategic-misjudgment. In summary, the formation of the Escort Coalition in the Persian Gulf was an unsuccessful act of "maximum pressure", and the "maximum pressure" strategy that time did not achieve the expected results because of the bottom-line thinking of the allies. But as far as the regional security situation is concerned, this failure of "maximum pressure" is not a bad thing.

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