

The Coast Guard Administration (CGA) and the US Coast Guard last month signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish a coast guard working group. The agreement is an important milestone in the transformation of Taiwan's coast guard toward the US model. Despite this positive piece of news, the pan-blue camp has, once again, adopted a bizarre and illogical stance.

Broadcasting Corp of China chairman Jaw Shaw-kong (賈曉剛) has proposed that Taiwan sign an MOU with the Chinese Coast Guard for the joint defense of the disputed Diaoyutai Islands (釣魚台) — known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan.

I performed my military service in the coast guard and left with the rank of sergeant while the organization was still attached to the Ministry of National Defense.

Today, the CGA has been folded into the Executive Yuan and is run as a branch of law enforcement, with police systems integrated into the organization. This means there are parallel systems within the CGA: the legacy military system and the newer police system.

CGA Director-General Chou Mei-wu (周梅武) is a retired navy vice admiral. There is an unwritten rule that if the agency's director-general is a retired military officer then the deputy director-general must be a retired police officer, and visa versa.

However, at its core, the CGA still remains a military organization aligned closely with the navy. Given this, can anyone seriously imagine a situation in which the CGA cooperates with the Chinese navy?

Some members of the pan-blue camp clearly do not possess even the most basic understanding of the coast guard and are arguing for a policy that would hinder the CGA's development. One wonders what their motive could possibly be for doing this.

The MOU between Taiwan and the US is intended by Washington to elevate the regional

status of Taiwan's coast guard. The CGA has signed cooperation agreements with friendly Pacific nations, including Palau, the Marshall Islands and Nauru, and has provided these countries with technical assistance for coast guard vessel construction.

In contrast with highly sensitive bilateral naval agreements, the CGA has achieved a high level of cooperation with the US to jointly combat China's "gray zone" tactics in the Indo-Pacific region.

Each time a video is released of the CGA expelling Chinese vessels that have made illegal incursions into Taiwan's sovereign waters in the Taiwan Strait, it provides a record of real combat experience gained by the CGA as it seeks to contain the expansion of China's fishing boat militia.

It is primarily this record of frontline maritime law enforcement and the courageous actions of CGA personnel that motivated the US to enter into an agreement with Taiwan.

The CGA's tireless policing of Taiwan's sovereign waters, day in and day out, has also shone a light on the daily incursions of China's bandit fishing boats and helped to turn public opinion firmly against Beijing.

The success that the CGA enjoys today is a result of its resolute and tenacious defense of the nation's maritime security within the first island chain.

Returning to the pan-blue camp's reaction, one is left wondering whether it is possible for it to sink any lower. When will its members begin to address the head-banging "deep-blue" ultras within its ranks? Do they not realize that every time they insult and belittle national defense and maritime security, they not only vividly demonstrate that the pan-blue camp has failed to make any progress within the past three decades, but also show the outside world that they really are the Chinese Communist Party's comrades-in-arms.

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## China's pan-blue comrades-in-arms

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Wednesday, 07 April 2021 04:38

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2021/04/07](#)