

# **Power Struggle and Diplomatic Crisis: Past, Present and Prospects of Sino-Japanese Relations over the Senkaku Conundrum**

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# Three Hypotheses

- A: Japan's provocation
  - B: China's maritime expansionism
  - C: Domestic politics in both China and Japan
- ◆ Matsuda's view:  $C > B > A$

# Hypothesis A: Japan's provocation

- “Revival of militarism”
  - “Right wing” dominates Japan
  - “Challenge against post-WWII order”
  - Ishihara-Noda axis's conspiracy
- ◆ China can justify its every action by this, but China highly appreciated Japan's peaceful development in 2008...

# Hypothesis B: China's maritime expansionism

- South China Sea
- East China Sea
- West Pacific
- Establishment of the Leading Small Group of Maintenance of Maritime Interests (headed by Xi Jinping), “Sansha City”
- ◆ China has passed the “point-of-no-return.” Without Japan's concession, there will be no improvement of relations.

# Hypothesis C: Domestic politics

- China: leadership change and power struggle, ultra-nationalism, criticism on the internet
- Japan: weak government, elections, bureaucratic red tape
- Political instability in both nations caused the problem.
- ◆ “2012 problem” is over. If both countries need cooperation for the sake of their own economy, they will seek improvement.

# Matsuda's assumption

- Trigger: Japan's action (Ishihara, Noda)
  - Fundamental cause: domestic politics (power struggle in China)
  - Background cause: China's maritime expansion
- ◆ There will be a chance of improvement.

# Comparison: difference between China, Russia and Korea

- Northern Territory: Part of Hokkaido, the Soviets invaded in violation of the treaty and Japanese citizens were expelled. The Soviets recognized the existence of territorial disputes in 1956, but denied this later.
- Russia controls the islands. Japan seeks diplomatic solution.

# Comparison: difference between China, Russia and Korea

- Takeshima: Korea occupied by force in 1952. Korea recognized the existence of territorial disputes in 1965, but later denied this.
- Korea controls the islands. Japan seeks diplomatic solution.



# Comparison: difference between China, Russia and Korea

- Senkaku issue: Japan's "*occupatio*"--a method of acquiring ownership of unowned property (*terra nullius*), at the end of war in 1895.
- No official claims had been made for 76 years
- Japan controls the islands. There is no written document on Senkaku issue between Japan and China. China insists that there is a consensus to shelve disputes, Japan denies it.
- China seeks to change the status-quo through physical means and threat by force

# Historical Background (-1895)

- A part of Ryukyu (Okinawa), Taiwan, or the border of them? : documents differ.
- No residents were found before 1895
- Japan had suspicions of the ownership of the Senkakus. A 10-year period of research confirmed no one ruled the islands. Because the “*occupatio*” was done during the war, Japan’s behavior was suspicious and gray.

# Historical Background (1895-1945)

- Shimonoseki Treaty: neither Japan nor Qing considered the Senkakus as part of Taiwan (ROC and PRC's positions on this issue after 1971 are against this fact)
- Qing has never made claims on the Senkakus to Japan.
- ROC inherited Qing's position, thus it recognized the Senkaku was a part of Ryukyu.
- Japanese citizens ran a factory on the islands.

# Historical Background, ROC (1945-1971)

- US occupied Okinawa including the Senkakus and the ROC requisitioned Taiwan, but the ROC never raised protest against US over the islands.
- The Senkaku Islands were not included in the territories Japan renounced under Article 2 of the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty (which included Taiwan and the Penghu islands) and were included in “Nansei Shoto south of 29 degrees north latitude (including the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands),” which were placed under U.S. administration under Article 3 of the treaty.

# Historical Background, ROC (1945-1971)

- ROC had never raised a protest and signed the Peace Treaty with Japan in 1952.
- Their attitude toward the islands started changing after a survey in 1968 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) discovered potential oil reserves in areas around the islands.
- ROC made the first claim in June 1971.
- Maps have changed to reflect this claim after the 1970s.

# Historical Background, PRC (1949-1971)

- PRC criticized the US occupation of both Okinawa and Taiwan. Thus, PRC did criticize the US.
- The *People's Daily* on Jan. 8, 1953, and maps in 1960s show the Senkakus as part of Okinawa.
- An official MOFA document from May 15, 1950 shows the PRC government's recognition of the Senkakus as part of the Ryukyus.

# Nature of the Problem

- PRC government: Documentation never changes China's position.
- Historical background doesn't count. Every party became a hostage of its predecessors' decision-making from 118 years ago and 41 years ago.
- Memory of war: the "Diaoyutai/dao" becomes the symbol of Japan's invasion of China
- This problem should be minimized!

# Row over the islands (1978-2012)

- 1978: Armed fishery boats' invasion
- 1992: PRC's Territorial Water Law includes "Diaoyudao" (It didn't in 1958)
- 2002: Japan began to lease the islands for quiet and stable control, PRC did not make any claim
- 2008: PRC's maritime surveillance ship entered territorial water for eight hours
- In the meantime, access and landing of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan's activists
- 2010: Collision incident: Routine access by PRC's government ships



# Japan's Process of Purchase

- Questions of Ishihara's intention
- Owner's intention: making money
- Noda's intention: "quiet and stable control" as Japan did in 2002
- Conspiracy theory: Ishihara-Noda axis?  
Construction on the islands?

# China's Power Struggle, Scandals

- Wang Lijun, Bo Xilai and Gu Kailai incident
  - Lin Jihua's son, Ling Gu car accident
  - Wen Jiabao's family financial scandal
  - Li Keqiang's brother's financial scandal
  - Hu Jintao was successful in Beidaihe, but lost control after September
- ◆ Power struggle becomes “zero-sum”

# China's Power Struggles, Personnel in the CMC

- Unprecedented personnel change: 18<sup>th</sup> CMC members decided in the end of 17<sup>th</sup> central committee
- Dark horse in the Vice Chairman: Fan Chanlong
- Failure of GPD and promotion of air force (Xu Qiliang)
- Hu Jintao's perfect resignation

# China's Power Struggles, Personnel in the Politburo

- Three elements: CYL, Shanghai faction, and Prince Party
- Hu Jintao's failure in the Standing Committee: most of the members are from Shanghai faction
- CYL dominates young generation in Politburo
- Sun Zhengcai and Hu Chunhua are hopeful in the sixth generation

# Hu Jintao's Japan Policy

- Hu Jintao inherited his mentor, Hu Yaobang's view on Japan
- Hu Jintao understands the importance of Japan, once tried to promote "New Thinking" in 2002
- Hu Jintao amend the relations with Abe in 2006
- ◆ All of above become negative for Hu Jintao, and he lost the leadership in decision-making

# Escalation from Sep. 2012

- Xi Jinping “emerged” as a hard-liner in September (Leading Small Group...)
- More than 100 anti-Japanese riots: many deviation cases---power transition
- Military exercises
- Placed ships in contiguous zone, and entered territorial water many times
- Invasion of airspace, access to ADIZ
- Usage of fire control radar on MSDF

# Future Prospects, overview

- Both/three parties have difficulties in making concessions
- Japan as a status-quo power has greater difficulty in making a concession (by Prospect Theory)
- PRC: transition continues until the NPC in March
- Japan: transition continues until the Upper House Election in July
- US role: prevention of escalation during the transitions

# Future Prospects, PRC's approach and goals

- No war, no accidents
- No peaceful solutions: physical and political pressure on Japan
- Letting the US retreat from the Senkaku issue
- Letting Japan accept the existence of the territorial issue



# Future Prospects, Japan's approach and goals

- Realism rather than nationalism
- Making no concessions on sovereignty (not rewarding China's hawkish approach)
- Strengthening defense and the coast guard
- Strengthening the US-Japan Alliance
- Improving relations with Korea, Taiwan and Southeast Asia
- Continuing engagement policy (mutually beneficial relationship)
- Choose the best timing and show flexibility

# Future Prospects, Nature of Relationship

- Long-term rivalry (similarity with the 1996 Taiwan-Strait Crisis and after)
- Vulnerable relationship: cycle of deterioration-improvement
- Conclusion of the Senkaku issue may decide the PRC's behavior in the future.