Sino-Japanese Security Relations: Concerns, Competition and Communication

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Key Questions

- What are the characteristics of the security environment in East Asia?
- What are the different intentions underlying the defense exchanges between Japan and China?
- What are characteristics of Sino-Japanese security relations?
- What are the major concerns of both sides?
- What are the major trends in their relations?
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Characteristics of East Asia

- Strong sovereign states, weak regional identity
- Duality of modern states and a post-modern state, diversity from a Stalinist state to democracies.
- Duality of traditional and non-traditional threats
- Existence of “divided nations” and “territorial disputes”
- Strong bilateral alliance network: US centered hub and spoke structure
- Weak multilateral security cooperation
Characteristics of East Asia

Late Cold-War Period (1970s)

Hostility ends

- From foes to friends: Sino-Japanese War, Korean War, Vietnam War
- Sino-U.S. rapprochement: Sino-Japanese normalization of diplomatic relations (1972)
- The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the PRC (1978)
Late Cold-War Period (1970s-80s)

Strategic approach, but lacking defense cooperation

- Positive factor: Soviet Union, but different expectations

- Negative factors:
  1) Chinese potential criticism of Japanese “militarism”
  2) Japanese “pacifism”: no arms export, no technology transfer, no military advisory groups, close ties with countries other than US were avoided

- China’s expectation and its failure: Wu Xiuquan “defense budget can be 2 % of GDP” (1978), Nakasone’s formal visit to Yasukuni (1985)
The Post Cold-War Period (1990s)
Development of and limitation to defense exchanges

- Tiananmen Square Incident (1989): halt of defense exchanges, sharp drop in Japanese public affinity toward China
- Strategic approach: Japanese Emperor’s visit to Beijing (1992)
The Post Cold-War Period (1990s)
Same bed, different dreams regarding defense exchanges

- China’s goals: 1) gathering intelligence on JSDF and US forces in Japan, 2) trying to erode JSDF support for the alliance with the US, 3) understanding Japan’s defense planning and thinking, 4) learning how Japan manages its military, 5) contributing to Sino-Japanese relations

- Japan’s goals: 1) part of engagement policy toward China, 2) to improve transparency of both sides

The Post Cold-War Period (1990s-2000s)
Symbolism-centered defense exchanges

- Koizumi’s Yasukuni visit: 1) cancellation of Director-General of JDA, Gen Nakatani’s visit to China (2002), 2) delay of mutual port calls (from 1998 to 2007)
- “Safety valve” theory: only a high degree of symbolism, no actual benefit (weapons, technology, and intelligence)
- Working-level exchanges and 2\textsuperscript{nd} track exchanges tend not to be halted
The Post Cold-War Period (2000s)

Framework of Present Defense Exchanges

- Ministerial level mutual visits
- Deputy ministerial level visits
- Service chief level visits
- Security dialogue (director level, both defense and foreign)
- Working level talks
- Mutual port calls
Changing Security Environment during the Post Cold-War Period in East Asia

- Globalization and economic development
- Reduction in probability of large-scale war among major powers
- Conflicts in between “peacetime and wartime” or “gray zones” increase
- Security challenges and destabilizing factors are diverse, complex, and intertwined
- Rise of China and nuclear development of DPRK
- Relative decline of US and Japanese influence
Increase in Japanese Concerns

- Evolving concerns: from a failed state (collapse or division) to a rogue state or a hegemonic state
- Anti-Japanese events: demonstrations
- Military modernization with low transparency
- Risks involved in Taiwan issue
- Support for DPRK: sanction doesn’t work, why?
- Unilateral maritime development: East and South China Sea
- Risks of accidental collisions: submarine enters to the territorial waters, helicopter’s abnormal approach
China’s four scenarios
(Japan’s view)

Cooperative

- Cooperative power
- Failed state

Modernization

- Hegemonic power
- Rogue state

Hegemonic/Unilateral

Stagnation
China: Maritime Activities 2010

Graph 2: Main activities of Chinese Navy in waters near Japan

- **October 2008**: A Sovremenny-class destroyer and four other warships pass through the Tsugaru Strait (the first Chinese naval warships to conduct this operation). The ships subsequently circle Japan.
- **June 2009**: Five warships including a Luzhou-class destroyer pass by the Nansei Islands and advance to a location approximately 260km northeast of Okinotori Island.
- **November 2004**: A Chinese nuclear submarine travels submerged through Japanese territorial waters.
- **October 2006**: A Song-class submarine surfaces near the USS Kitty Hawk supercarrier.
- **September 2005**: Five warships including a Sovremenny-class destroyer travel past the vicinity of the Kashi gas field. Three of the warships circle the Kashi gas field extraction facilities.
- **November 2008**: Four warships including a Luzhou-class destroyer pass between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island and advance into the Pacific Ocean.
- **March 2010**: Six warships including a Luzhou-class destroyer pass between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island and advance into the Pacific Ocean.
- **April 2010**: 10 warships including a Kilo-class submarine and Sovremenny-class destroyer pass between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island and advance into the Pacific Ocean. While passing between the islands, an MSDF escort ship is buzzed on several occasions by a Chinese carrier-based helicopter.
- **July 2010**: Two warships including a Luzhou-class destroyer pass between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island and advance into the Pacific Ocean.

Source: Prepared from data of Japanese Defense Ministry

China: Maritime Activities 2011

Figure 1. Chinese naval exercises conducted in the western Pacific in 2011

June 2011: A Chinese naval fleet comprising 11 vessels carried out training exercises in waters approximately 450 km southwest of Okinotorishima, including target practice and training for UAVs.

November 2011: A Chinese naval fleet comprising 5 vessels carried out operation of ship-borne helicopters and refueling exercises in waters approximately 900 km southwest of Okinotorishima.

# China: Regular Visits to Senkaku

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Affiliation of ships</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Political Timing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep. 10-17, 2010</td>
<td>Yuzheng 201, Yuzheng 202, Yuzheng 204</td>
<td>Navigates around connected water</td>
<td>Senkaku collision incident, DPJ presidential election</td>
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<td>Sep. 24-Oct. 6, 2010</td>
<td>Yuzheng 201, Yuzheng 203</td>
<td>ditto</td>
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<td>Oct. 24-25, 2010</td>
<td>Yuzheng 118, Yuzheng 202</td>
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<td>Nov. 20-21, 2010</td>
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<td>Nov. 28-29, 2010</td>
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<td>Jan. 27, 2011</td>
<td>Yuzheng 201</td>
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<td>Mar. 5, 2011</td>
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<td>Mar. 9, 2011</td>
<td>Yuzheng 202</td>
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<td>Mar. 11-12, 2011</td>
<td>Yuzheng 202</td>
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<td>Earthquake and Tsunami</td>
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<td>July 3, 2011</td>
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<td>July 30, 2011</td>
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<td>Aug. 24, 2011</td>
<td>Yuzheng 31001, Yuzheng 201</td>
<td>Enters into the territorial water</td>
<td>DPJ presidential election</td>
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China to Revise the Status Quo

“Breaking Japan’s effective control over the islands”

*People’s Daily*, March 21, 2012
South China Sea: Growing Conflicts

Increase in Chinese Concerns

- US-Japan “intervention” over Taiwan: New Defense Guidelines, SASJ law, good Japan-Taiwan relations
- Enhancement of US-Japan alliance: US “encirclement” of China
- Japan’s rearmament: historical burden, Japan’s evolving changes on security issues, “growing nationalism and militarism,” “assertive military build-up”
- Missile defense deployment: neutralization of China’s “minimum deterrence”
Japan’s four scenarios
(China’s view)

Dependence on US

Strong alliance
Weak alliance

Development

Revival of militarism
Sino-Japanese coalition

Independence from US
Engagement in Regional Security
US-Japan Control over Taiwan Contingency

- US Taiwan Relations Act: US may intervene in the Taiwan Strait (strategic ambiguity)
- Japan’s SASJ law: rear area support (without weapons and ammunitions in non-combat area)
- Japan’s three options: 1) to evacuate Japanese citizens, 2) to allow US use of its bases in Japan, 3) to authorize SASJ and support US military
- Danger of war between China and the US-Japan alliance
Engagement in Regional Security
Sino-US engagement over DPRK Nuclear Development

- Three Party Talks: China’s initiative on DPRK’s nuclear issue
- Six Party Talks: platform of multi-lateral cooperation
- Nuclear tests (2006-) and “missile” tests (2009-): China tries to persuade DPRK
- Stability in the Korean Peninsula: China’s first priority
- Japan is in a secondary position
Crisis Management Efforts

- China’s naval development
- Senkaku/Diaoyudao issue: risk of accidents
- Sponsoring research, conferences, proposals and appeals on crisis management
- Solutions?: 1) Military hotlines, 2) Joint Working Group for Founding the Maritime Liaison Mechanism
- Stall in implementation: lack of transparency in China’s decision-making process
Room for New Cooperation

- Search and rescue operations: needs-based cooperation
- UNPKOs and Anti-piracy operations: possibility of joint operations
- Natural disaster relief: earthquake and Tsunami, abortion of JSDF’s transport planes during Sichuan earthquake
- New security architectures: Six Party Talks, EAS, ADMM Plus
Room for New Cooperation

Figure 4. PLAN’s escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and the “Peace Ark 2010” by the hospital ship Daishandao

Djibouti: September 22 to September 29, 2010
Chittagong: November 9 to November 15, 2010
Mombasa: October 13 to October 18, 2010
Dar es Salaam: October 19 to October 24, 2010
Seychelles: October 27 to November 1, 2010

Notes: The arrows on the map do not necessarily represent the accurate route of the Daishandao. The dates shown represent the port call and departure dates.
Sources: Data from PLA Daily and Xinhua News Agency

Conclusions

- Geo-strategic environment in East Asia: land powers vs. sea powers continues, but never actually confront each other
- Sino-Japanese security relations as a dependent variable: key role of Sino-US relations
- Vulnerability caused by historical burden and lack of strategic trust
- China’s activeness vs. Japan’s reactiveness
- Different interests concerning regional security: Taiwan/DPRK
- From symbolism to crisis management in operations?