

Position Paper: Japan-China Relations Surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 18, 2012

1. China's airspace incursion was extremely dangerous

- On December 13, China committed a further dangerous act when a Chinese State Oceanic Administration aircraft intruded Japan's airspace by flying over the Senkaku Islands. This is the first intrusion of this kind, and is dangerous behavior that increases the possibility of a contingency and that escalates the current situation.
- Based on international law, every state has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory. China's intrusion of Japan's airspace constitutes an unlawful act. Also, any country can take necessary measures to stop an airspace incursion.
- While the Government of Japan intends to calmly deal with the matter under any circumstances, Japan will take a firm response to airspace incursions under domestic laws and regulations. When the airspace incursion occurred on December 13, Japan took a countermeasure using its Air Self-Defense Forces, which is a standard operation procedure that is widely recognized in the international community as countering an airspace incursion by a foreign aircraft.

2. Deep concern about the escalation of the situation caused unilaterally by China

- China continues to unilaterally escalate the situation. It is China that is challenging the status quo concerning the Senkaku Islands. Why does China choose to challenge it not based on international law but by coercion? Is this a China that "opposes hegemonism and power politics in all their forms" and that "will never seek hegemony or engage in expansion (from a report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party)"? Does China want to see Japan-China relations pass the point of no return?
- If China further escalates the current situation, Japan will have no choice but to consider its future response with adequate readiness accordingly. Japan is deeply concerned that the environment for continued communications between diplomatic authorities in the two countries could be harmed. Japan strongly hopes that China will prove its diplomacy of "peacefully dealing with issues" by its own action.

3. Japan, a peace-loving country, contributes to peace and prosperity in the region

- Japan's basic position that the Senkaku Islands belong to Japan is unshakable. At the same time, Japan, as a responsible stakeholder of the region, will deal with the current situation in a calm manner from a broad perspective. In fact, Japan is ready to maintain close communications with China in an effort to ease tensions.
- Based on the national policies that Japan has consistently maintained after World War II, Japan, as a peace-loving nation, will continue to contribute to peace and prosperity in Asia.

(Reference) Facts about China's provocative actions

Recently, Chinese provocative actions in the waters near the Senkaku Islands have become conspicuously intense. China's intention to topple the status quo concerning Japan's valid control by use of coercion is clear and thorough. During the period between September 11 and December 15, Chinese government vessels navigated the Japanese contiguous waters off the coast of the Senkaku Islands nearly daily, except some days when the weather was terrible due to typhoons. They have intruded Japanese territorial waters as many as 18 times using a total of 62 vessels. The vessels sometimes stay in the Japanese territorial waters for more than seven hours.

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