

IMAGE – Japanese Coast Guard standing watch over the Senkaku Islands. WIKIMEDIA / Al Jazeera English



The 2010 Senkaku crisis

NATIONS INVOLVED: People's Republic of China (China); Japan;
Republic of China (Taiwan); United States (US)

TIME PERIOD: September – November 2010

THEMATIC AREA: Economic leverage, Territorial violation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Senkaku Islands are a group of five uninhabited islands and three islets located in the East China Sea. They are under the administrative control of Japan, but are also claimed by China and Taiwan. The Senkaku Islands have both economic and military value, as there are rich fishing grounds in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding the Senkaku Islands, as well as significant oil and gas deposits. The islands are also of great geostrategic value, facilitating control over the East China Sea.

In September 2010, a Chinese fishing trawler refused Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) requests to leave Senkaku territorial waters. After a stand-off, the trawler rammed two JCG vessels and after a 40 minute chase, the JCG boarded the Chinese trawler and arrested the 15-man crew and captain. The captain was later tried under Japanese domestic law. China initiated a range of hostile measures in response to the incident. In particular, China drastically curbed its rare earth elements (REE) exports to Japan, whose high-tech oriented economy is very dependent on REEs. As of 2009, Chinese supplies comprised 80 per cent of Japan's demand for REEs. Short-term, China wanted to force Japan to immediately release the detained trawler captain; long-term, China wanted to demonstrate its ability to use a potent economic instrument which could be used as deterrent and as coercive measure or for punishment.

KEY POINTS

- This was an example of a small event which escalated into an international incident. While it is highly unlikely that the Chinese fishing trawler was acting under direct command of the PRC, the **incident** was still readily **exploited for strategic gain**.
- Adversarial measures relied heavily on **ambiguity**. The two key aspects included the **informal nature of the embargo** on REE and the **involvement of a non-state actor** (civilian fishing vessel) as catalyst for the conflict.
- In response to such flexible and adaptive StratCom approaches, nations should focus on the **consistency and coherence of government messaging**, rather than trying to decipher deliberately ambiguous statements and actions.
- If one interprets the 2010 Senkaku crisis from the perspective of 2018, it very much resembles an initial **engagement used to test the opponent's defences and potential international reaction**. The political tensions between China and Japan resurged in 2012 and remain elevated, with the islands as one focal point of the confrontation.

SUMMARY

The Senkaku Islands are a group of five uninhabited islands and three islets located in the East China Sea, which are under the administrative control of Japan, but also claimed by China and Taiwan. The Senkaku Islands have both economic and military value. There are rich fishing grounds in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding the Senkaku islands, as well as significant oil and gas deposits. The islands are also of great geostrategic value, facilitating control over the East China Sea.

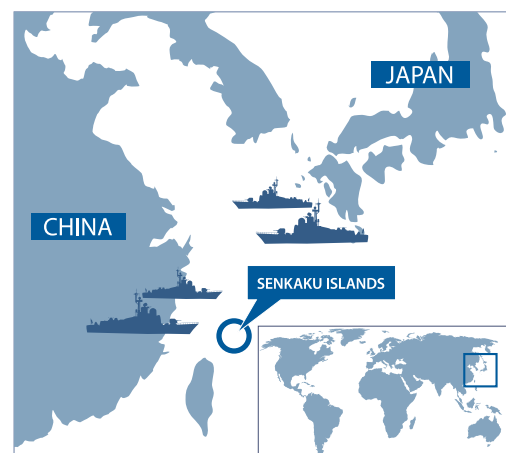
The 2010 Senkaku crisis started with an incident involving a Chinese trawler, which refused to leave the Senkaku territorial waters after being requested to do so by the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG). The trawler was one of the hundreds of Chinese fishing boats illegally fishing in the Senkaku area at that time. After a static stand-off, the trawler intentionally rammed two JCG vessels, and after a 40 minute chase, the JCG was able to board the Chinese trawler to arrest the 15 man crew and captain.

In response, China initiated a series of escalatory measures, including rhetorical threats, encouraging popular protests across the Chinese mainland, the arrest of four Japanese nationals in China for allegedly photographing military targets and the implementation of an unofficial embargo on Rare Earth Elements (REE). These measures were implemented with various degrees of ambiguity and designed to exploit a number of Japanese vulnerabilities – including the government’s weakened domestic position and the Japanese economy’s high dependency on Chinese REE exports.

In the short-term, China tried to force Japan to release the detained trawler captain immediately. In the long-term however, China likely wanted to demonstrate its ability to use a potent economic instrument which could be used as deterrent, and as coercive measure.

The Japanese government came under strong domestic criticism for the way it dealt with the crisis, in particular for releasing the Chinese captain responsible for the ramming incident after several weeks without indicting him. One hundred conservative lawmakers signed a letter criticising the release of the captain, and citizens took to the street to protest both China’s behaviour and the “weakness” of the Japanese government. Video footage proving the deliberate nature of the boat ramming was only shown to Japanese lawmakers in a closed screening, but not released to the wider public, likely out of fear of further diplomatic clashes with Beijing.¹ The footage was eventually leaked online and led to increased criticism of the Japanese government for keeping details of the incident from the public.

The crisis was resolved by the end of November 2010 when diplomatic dialogue between both nations was restored fully and a significant de-escalation of measures took place.



¹ Ito Masami and Mizuho Aoki, “Senkaku Collisions Video Leak Riles China,” *The Japan Times*, 6 November 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/11/06/national/senkaku-collisions-video-leak-riles-china/#.Whh8yVWnHIU>

Timeline of Key Events



² Ito Masami and Mizuho Aoki, "Senkaku Collisions Video Leak Riles China," *The Japan Times*, 6 November 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/11/06/national/senkaku-collisions-video-leak-riles-china/#.Whh8yVWnHIU>

CONTEXT

The Senkaku Islands

The Senkaku Islands are a group of five uninhabited islands and three islets located in the southern part of the East China Sea. The islands are under the administrative control of Japan, but are also claimed by China (where the islands are known as 'Diaoyu') and Taiwan (where they are called 'Diaoyutai'). An active territorial dispute only exists between China and Japan, and between Taiwan and Japan. China and Taiwan both agree that the islands are an integral part of Taiwanese territory – by extension, given China's official political stance on Taiwan, Beijing *de facto* considers the islands as part of Chinese territory.



SCHEME – The modern political history of the Senkaku Islands

The geopolitical value of the Senkaku Islands is mainly derived from their economic resources and military strategic position. The Senkaku area offers rich fishing grounds, and there are significant oil and gas deposits located under the seabed. If militarised, the islands could offer a strategic outpost that facilitates intelligence gathering and power projection in the East China Sea, the Taiwan area and the Ryukyu Islands. These factors would be particularly important for China if it sought to expand its military influence in the region.

The security of the Senkaku Islands also depends heavily on the US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security (TMCS). The treaty provides a legal framework for stationing of US military bases in Japan. It commits both parties to assist each other in case either of them is attacked on Japanese territory. However, the text does not explicitly mention the Senkaku Islands. They are covered implicitly in the treaty in reference to territories under Japan's administration.

What further complicates the matter is that the United States does not formally take sides in the ongoing territorial dispute related to the islands. Naturally, the United States does not deny that the islands are under the administrative control of Japan, but at the same time Washington takes a somewhat reserved stance in issuing official statements confirming that the Senkaku Islands fall under provisions of the TMCS.

In 1978 Beijing and Tokyo signed the Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty, a key step in the normalisation of diplomatic relations between both countries. During treaty negotiations both sides agreed that the Senkaku Islands territorial should be put aside (i.e. "shelved") and resolved at an unspecified time in the future.

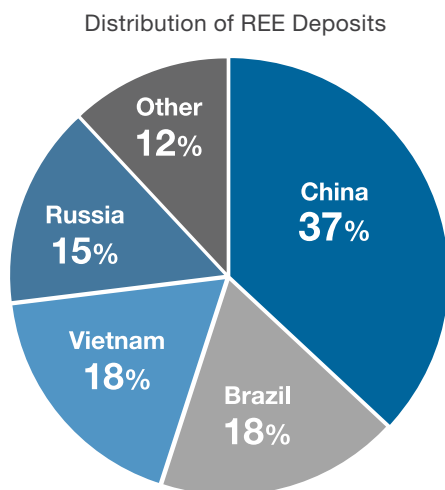
The Senkakus briefly became an object of intense controversy in 1996, when Japanese activists landed on one of the islands and built a lighthouse there. This provoked a series of demonstrations in mainland China, Hong Kong

and Taiwan. There were also attempts by anti-Japan activists to reach the islands by sea, leading to one drowning. In 2004, activists from mainland China succeeded for the first time in landing on the islands, which reignited bilateral tensions. Following the incident, Beijing and Tokyo reportedly agreed that China would strive to prevent activists from sailing to the Senkakus, while Tokyo committed to a “deport-not-detain” policy for potential violators. In 2008, two vessels of the Chinese coast guard entered and remained for several hours in contiguous waters of the Senkaku Islands.

While politically-driven incidents were relatively rare, there was a significant number of violations caused by illegal fishing in the exclusive economic zone of the Senkaku Islands by both Chinese and Taiwanese fishermen. However, the Japanese side was treating it as a criminal rather than a political issue, and the subject did not provoke significant diplomatic tension.

China as a Global Supplier of Rare Earth Elements (REEs)

Rare Earth Elements (REEs) are a set of seventeen chemical elements in the periodic table which, despite their name, are relatively abundant in the Earth’s crust. However, the mineable concentrations offering sufficient density of REE ores are much less common. Production of REEs involves the use of highly toxic materials, which puts constraints on the production in countries with strict environmental standards. REEs are a critical component in the production of a wide range of technologically advanced civilian and military products. Substitutes do exist, but are considered less effective and costlier.



SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey, *Mineral Commodity Summaries 2017* (Reston, Virginia: USGS, 2017)

Since the early 2000s, production has been dominated by China, which represents well over 90 per cent of the global supply. In 2009, the year preceding the Senkaku crisis, China represented 97 per cent of the global REE supply. Japan depended on China for around 90 per cent of its REE needs and was the destination for roughly 50 per cent of Chinese exports.³

From the mid-2000s, China began to change its strategy by imposing production and export quotas on the domestic REE industry. A more constrained supply led to a significant increase in REE prices (e.g. between 2002 and early 2010 the REE price index increased roughly fourfold). Beijing named environmental concerns as the reason for putting some limits on REE production. This approach caused concern among key importers who were afraid that the new Chinese policies might create product shortages and exacerbate existing price hikes. The most significant reduction of REE export quota was announced in July 2010, when the amount of planned REE exports for H2 2010 was slashed by 72 per cent compared to the same period last in the previous year.

³ Keisuke Iida, *Japan’s Security and Economic Dependence on China and the United States: Cool Politics, Lukewarm Economics* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

Japanese Domestic Politics

2009 brought a major change to Japan's domestic political scene – the general election in August resulted in the victory of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), ending the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) era, which was almost exclusively in power since 1955.⁴ The DPJ campaigned on the promise to break with the policies of the LDP, such as ending significant spending on controversial public works projects. From a foreign policy perspective, the DPJ was expected to pursue a more Asia-centric, and more importantly China-centric approach while seeking a more equal relationship with the US. The DPJ cabinet was formed in September under the premiership of Yukio Hatoyama.

Despite its initial popularity, the Hatoyama government came under increased pressure and criticism, culminating in the Hatoyama's resignation in June 2010. Hatoyama's resignation was primarily driven by the government's inability to deliver on the promised changes in Japan-US relations (see above), limited success in reviving the economic performance of the country, and controversies related to irregularities in Hatoyama's election campaign financing.

A new government formed in June 2010 under the premiership of Naoto Kan. However, Kan failed to restore the DPJ's popularity. The party lost ten seats in the July 2010 elections to the House of Councillors, losing the DPJ-led coalition majority in the upper chamber. As PM Naoto Kan came under increasing internal and external criticism, he was challenged by Ichiro Ozawa for the role of DPJ leader and prime minister at the end of August and only won the final vote by a narrow margin.

Japan-China Relations

During the years following the 2010 Senkaku crisis, China-Japan relations experienced a gradual improvement from what was called the “deep freeze” era between 2001 and 2006.⁵ In 2008 this vision for new constructive relations was outlined in a joint statement signed in 2008 by China's President Hu Jintao and Japan's Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda. The statement included a section on economic cooperation which underlined the shared desire to make the East China Sea a “Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship.”

Shortly after, an initial agreement was announced to commence joint development of the natural resources in the East China Sea. However, the specific details of the agreement, such as the exact delimitation of the boundary between exclusive economic zones were left open for consultation at later stages of the negotiation process. In the same vein, the overall China-Japan relations between 2006 and 2010 improved in the diplomatic sphere but did not lead to the resolution of any of the key political issues between both countries.



IMAGE – Cover of *The Economist* in September 2012.

⁴ Between 1993 and 1996, the LDP in opposition was for 11 months and then governed as a member of a coalition until regaining the parliamentary majority in the 1996 elections.

⁵ The bi-lateral relations suffered during the tenure of Japan PM Junichiro Koizumi, and were driven to a large extent by controversies related to interpretation of historical events.

Japan-US Relations

From late 2009 to early 2010, Japan-US relations were particularly tense following Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's announcement that their foreign policy would pursue more "equal" relations with the US and expand relations with China. In addition, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government sought a tougher stance on the contentious situation surrounding US troops on Japanese soil, particularly the relocation of the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station. Washington reacted coldly and refused to accept key conditions put forward by the Japanese side.

As a result, Hatoyama was forced to accept a far-reaching compromise in the new agreement of alignment of US forces in Japan signed on 28 May 2010. Important segments of Hatoyama's political base responded to the compromise negatively, significantly contributing to his resignation on 8 June 2010. In August, just before the crisis, *Kyodo News* reported unverified sources claiming that the Obama administration was unwilling to include the Senkaku Islands under the protection of the TMCS.⁶ These articles caused a stir in Japan and prompted speculation about the strength of US security guarantees.



Japanese Coast Guard Cutters stand watch over the Senkaku Islands (photo from 2012). IMAGE – WIKIMEDIA / Al Jazeera English

⁶ "U.S. Fudges Senkaku Security Pact Status," *The Japan Times*, 7 August 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/08/17/national/u-s-fudges-senkaku-security-pact-status/#.WgFtjFtSyUI>

Chinese Narratives

During the 2010 crisis, Chinese politicians presented a largely unified front to the public. Chinese state-controlled media were used to convey China's official political line, reinforce and complement the official messages (e.g. by repetition, adding context, providing additional arguments), voice messages which the officials did not want to express directly. The main narratives were:

- **Japan's actions are illegal and unreasonable.**
- **The Senkaku islands are rightfully China's.**
- **China has not imposed any embargo on Rare Earth Elements.**
- **Both parties should be careful not to escalate this situation.**
- **Japan and China need each other and should work together to compromise.**

Wen Jiabao, Premier

21 September 2010: "This is totally illegal, unreasonable and has already caused much suffering to the family of the captain."⁷

6 October 2010: "We haven't imposed, and will not, impose an embargo on the industry."⁸



Foreign Ministry, via spokesperson Jiang Yu

9 September 2010: "Japan's acts have violated the law of nations and basic international common sense, and are ridiculous, illegal and invalid."⁹

9 September 2010: "We demand Japanese patrol boats refrain from so-called law enforcement activities in waters off the Diaoyu islands."¹⁰

10 September 2010: "The Diaoyu islands and its adjacent islets have been Chinese territory since ancient times."¹¹

28 September 2010: "China highly values China-Japan relations. But safeguarding bilateral relations requires that the two sides meet halfway and requires Japan to take candid and practical actions."¹²

People's Daily, official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party

9 September 2010: "With the public spotlight increasingly focused on maritime conflicts between the two countries, Japan's irresponsible moves may eventually set fire to the Sino-Japanese relationship, or even force a military showdown."¹³

19 September 2010: "China should have a set of plans in place to further sanction Japan, fighting a diplomatic battle with Japan of successive retaliation. China should use enough resources and force, and be prepared to sustain losses, because if we don't, Japan will go further down the path of a hard line towards China, and conflict that erupts between China and Japan will be even more intense."¹⁴

⁷ Ian Johnson, "China Takes a Sharper Tone in Dispute With Japan," *The New York Times*, 22 September 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/23/world/asia/23chinajapan.html>

⁸ Xinhua, "Premier's Speech at the Sixth China-EU Business Summit," *China Internet Information Center*, 7 October 2010, http://www.china.org.cn/world/2010-10/07/content_21072538.htm

⁹ Xinhua, "China Postpones E China Sea Negotiation with Japan," *China Daily*, 11 September 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-09/11/content_11288437.htm

¹⁰ Mure Dickie and Kathrin Hille, "Japan's Arrest of Captain Angers Beijing," *Financial Times*, 9 September 2010, <https://www.ft.com/content/a09e651a-bb04-11df-9e1d-00144feab49a>

¹¹ Xinhua, "China Postpones E China Sea Negotiation with Japan," *China Daily*, 11 September 2010.

¹² Andrew Jacobs, "China Softens Tone in Japan Dispute," *The New York Times*, 28 September 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/29/world/asia/29chinajapan.html>

¹³ "Diaoyu Islands Collision a Dangerous Game," *People's Daily Online*, 9 September 2010, <http://en.people.cn/90001/90780/91343/7134448.html>

¹⁴ Justin McCurry, "China-Japan Relations Sour as Fishing Boat Dispute Escalates," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 20 September 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2010/0920/China-Japan-relations-sour-as-fishing-boat-dispute-escalates>

26 September 2010: “Japan’s development and prosperity cannot be divorced from China’s development and prosperity, and Japan cannot afford the price of continued contention with China.”¹⁵

China Daily, largest English-language newspaper in China by circulation

9 September 2010: “A wave of indignation is brewing in Chinese society, which might snowball into a major public outcry if the Japanese authorities continue to take a hardline stance.”¹⁶

Xinhua, official press agency of the PRC

10 September 2010: “Two Japanese patrol boats collided with a Chinese fishing boat in waters off the Diaoyu Islands Tuesday.”¹⁷

13 September 2010: “Japan never questioned China’s sovereignty over the islands before the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895.”¹⁸

Japanese Narratives

In contrast to China, the Japanese political elite was divided and criticising their opponents’ actions. Prime Minister Naoto Kan tried to maintain a constructive relationship with Beijing and to prevent escalation of the conflict, but he came under strong domestic criticism for his alleged¹⁹ role in the decision to release the Chinese captain. 100 conservative lawmakers, including former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, wrote a letter protesting the release of the Chinese captain.²⁰ The main narratives were:

- **Reaffirmation of Japan’s right to the Senkaku Islands.**
- **Underlining the necessity to contain the escalation and find a solution.**
- **Constructive criticism.**
- **Fervent anti-Chinese rhetoric.**
- **Criticism of Prime Minister Naoto Kan’s handling of the crisis, “national defeat/humiliation.”**

¹⁵ Justin McCurry and Tania Branigan, “Japan Demands China Pay to Repair Damage to Coastguard Vessels,” *The Guardian*, 27 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/27/japan-china-fishing-boat-row>

¹⁶ Justin McCurry, “Japan-China Row Escalates over Fishing Boat Collision,” *The Guardian*, 9 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/09/japan-china-fishing-boat-collision>

¹⁷ Xinhua, “Japanese Ambassador Summoned over Diaoyu,” *China Daily*, 10 September 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-09/10/content_11287371.htm

¹⁸ Xinhua, “Chinese Boat Crew Flying Home,” *China Daily*, 13 September 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-09/13/content_11290906.htm

¹⁹ The decision was formally made by the prosecutor responsible for the case; however, it is widely believed that the decision was the result of political pressure coming from the highest circles of Japanese politics. An indictment would almost certainly have led to further escalation of the crisis.

²⁰ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

Naoto Kan, Prime Minister

26 September 2010: “Senkaku is a Japanese territory. From that point of view, an apology or compensation is unthinkable. I have no intention at all of meeting the demand. [...] Both sides should first become calm and deepen mutually beneficial strategic ties. What is necessary is for both to cool down and keep in mind the bigger picture.”²¹

**Seiji Maehara, Foreign Minister**

28 September 2010: “No territorial issue exists.”²²

Yoshito Sengoku, Chief Cabinet Secretary

21 September 2010: “For the peace and development of East Asia and the Asia-Pacific, we want to use all available means of communication to ask that this be resolved without the situation escalating.”²³

Atsushi Saito, president of the Tokyo Stock Exchange

24 September 2010: “As a Japanese, I have mixed feelings about appearing so weak-kneed, but realistically speaking, we had to put this problem behind us.”²⁴

Yoshimi Watanabe, leader of the opposition Your Party

24 September 2010: “I’m flabbergasted that this was resolved with such a clear diplomatic defeat for Japan.”²⁵

Shintaro Ishihara, Governor of Tokyo

7 October 2010: “What China is doing is no different from gangsters. If Japan does nothing, it will suffer the same fate as Tibet.”²⁶

Yoshiko Sakurai, prominent journalist and writer

8 October 2010: “If Japan gives in on the Senkakus China will come to grab Okinawa next!”²⁷

Yukan Fuji, tabloid newspaper

1 October 2010: Front page headline “Dogeza gaiko” which loosely translates to ‘appeasement/submissive diplomacy,’ where ‘dogeza’ means to bow from a kneeling position.²⁸

²¹ Justin McCurry and Tania Branigan, “Japan Demands China Pay to Repair Damage to Coastguard Vessels,” *The Guardian*, 27 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/27/japan-china-fishing-boat-row>

²² Andrew Jacobs, “China Softens Tone in Japan Dispute,” *New York Times*, 28 September 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/29/world/asia/29chinajapan.html>

²³ Justin McCurry and Tania Branigan, “Japan Counsels against ‘Extreme Nationalism’ in Row with China,” *The Guardian*, 21 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/21/japan-china-trawlerman-row-nationalism>

²⁴ Martin Fackler and Ian Johnson, “Japan Retreats with Release of Chinese Boat Captain,” *The New York Times*, 24 September 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/25/world/asia/25chinajapan.html>

²⁵ Martin Fackler and Ian Johnson, “Japan Retreats with Release of Chinese Boat Captain,” *The New York Times*, 24 September 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/25/world/asia/25chinajapan.html>

²⁶ Mark Schreiber, “Weeklies, Tabloids Hawkish over China,” *The Japan Times*, 10 October 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/10/10/national/media-national/weeklies-tabloids-hawkish-over-china/#.Wf2yhVtSyUk>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Taiwanese Narratives

The Taiwanese government took an equivocal stance during the Senkaku crisis. On the one hand, it voiced criticism of Japanese actions²⁹ and actively supported the actions of Taiwanese Baodiao activists by dispatching coast guard vessels to escort them.³⁰ On the other hand, it called for de-escalation³¹ and officially distanced itself from China.³² The main narratives were:

- **Criticism of Japanese actions in the Senkaku/Diaoyu area.**
- **Asserting Taiwan's claims to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands as part of Greater China.**
- **Distancing the ROC's diplomatic position from that of the PRC.**
- **Calling for de-escalation of tensions and calm approach to the Senkaku/Diaoyu issue.**

Wu Den-yih, Premier

15 September 2010: "We firmly believe that the [Taiwanese] nation holds sovereignty over the islands, but this has become a controversial issue that cannot be resolved within a short period of time."³³

15 September 2010: "Everyone should control themselves. No one would want to see the three parties [Taiwan, China and Japan] go to war over the Diaoyutais."³⁴

15 September 2010: "We will fight for the nation's best interests rationally."³⁵



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, via deputy spokesperson James Chang

14 September 2010: "[The Taiwanese government was] deeply dissatisfied [with the actions of the Japanese patrol vessels]."³⁶

14 September 2010: "Operations of ships in the area fall within its [Taiwan's] sovereign jurisdiction."³⁷

14 September 2010: "[The government] did not side with China against Japan [on the Senkaku matter]"³⁸

Taiwanese Coast Guard

14 September 2010: Message displayed by Taiwanese Coast Guard during stand-off with the JCG over Baodiao's activists attempt to sail to Senkaku Islands: "The Diaoyutai islands are in Taiwan's sea area. Please do not dispute the nation's fishing activity. The coast guard is obligated to protect the nation's fishermen."³⁹

IMAGE – WIKIMEDIA / president.gov.tw

²⁹ Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Taiwan Protests at Japan 'Interference'," *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2010/09/15/2003482879>

³⁰ Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Activists Scale Down Diaoyutais Plan," *The Taipei Times*, 14 September 2010, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2010/09/14/2003482876>

³¹ Flora Wang, "Wu Calls for Self-Control Regarding Diaoyutai Dispute," *The Taipei Times*, 16 September 2010, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2010/09/16/2003483001>

³² Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Taiwan Protests at Japan 'Interference'," *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010.

³³ Flora Wang, "Wu Calls for Self-Control Regarding Diaoyutai Dispute," *The Taipei Times*, 16 September 2010.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Taiwan Protests at Japan 'Interference'," *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010. .

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

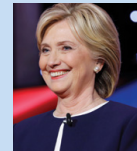
US Narratives

President Obama was personally engaged in solving the Senkaku crisis, including through bilateral meetings, but did not publicly confirm the US' obligation to defend the Senkakus under the TMCS. Although the Department of State initially took a rather passive and neutral stance regarding the 2010 Senkaku crisis, it later changed its position to a more pro-Japanese one. The main narratives were:

- **Bi-lateral talks to solve the dispute.**
- **Lack of clear position.**
- **Proposing the US as potential mediator.**⁴⁰
- **Reaffirming general support for Japan as a US ally.**

Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State

30 October 2010: "With respect to the Senkaku Islands, the United States has never taken a position on sovereignty, but we have made it very clear that the islands are part of our mutual treaty obligations, and the obligation to defend Japan."⁴¹



30 October 2010: "We've recommended to both [Japan and China] that the United States is more than willing to host a trilateral where we would bring China and Japan and their foreign ministers together to discuss a range of issues."⁴²

Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs

14 September 2010: "Well, on this narrow issue, we hope that would be resolved peacefully through dialogue between China and Japan. But the US-Japanese alliance is [...] a cornerstone of our ongoing interest in peace and stability in the region."⁴³

23 September 2010: "Washington does not take a position on the sovereignty of the Senkakus [but expects] the two mature countries are fully capable of resolving [the row]."⁴⁴

Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

23 September 2010: "Obviously we're very, very strongly in support of our ally in that region, Japan."⁴⁵

Robert M. Gates, Defense Secretary

23 September 2010: "[The US] would fulfil our alliance responsibility."⁴⁶

IMAGE – SHUTTERSTOCK

⁴⁰ The diplomatic position of the US evolved from suggesting bi-lateral format as best for solving the crisis to one proposing more active role of Washington.

⁴¹ CNN, "Clinton Urges Japan and China to Return to Talks over Disputed Islands," *CNN*, 1 November 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/10/30/vietnam.clinton.visit/index.html>

⁴² CNN, "Clinton Urges Japan and China to Return to Talks over Disputed Islands," *CNN*, 1 November 2010.

⁴³ US Department of State, "Daily Press Briefing – September 14, 2010," 14 September 2010, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2010/09/147112.htm#JAPAN>

⁴⁴ Kyodo, "Clinton: Senkakus Subject to Security Pact," *The Japan Times*, 25 September 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/09/25/national/clinton-senkakus-subject-to-security-pact/#.WgC7-1tSyUm>

⁴⁵ Elise Labott, "U.S. Walks Tightrope in China-Japan Dispute," *CNN*, 24 September 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/09/24/us.china.japan/>

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

MEASURES

Strategic Logic

China's behaviour was characterised by a significant degree of escalation both vertically (the severity of measures) and horizontally (the number and diversity of measures). Beijing's response included diplomatic sanctions, detention of Japanese nationals and the disruption of REE supplies.⁴⁷ By making such a strong political statement, China signalled a willingness to bear the high political costs resulting from the crisis, forcing Tokyo to reconsider whether the potential pay-off was sufficient to outweigh the punishment and/or risk further escalation by applying its own adversarial measures. Furthermore, China was cautious not to use conventional military measures as an instrument, most likely a deliberate approach to avoid being seen as an aggressor, which would likely be perceived negatively by the international community.

Chinese actions were highly ambiguous. The captain of the fishing boat was reportedly drunk at the time of the incident.⁴⁸ Consequently, the Japanese were neither able to attribute political responsibility to China for the incident (which would have been possible if rammed by a Chinese coast guard vessel), nor prove that the action was a result of a planned hostile political action conducted by a proxy. The detention of four Japanese individuals in China was also arranged so that no direct evidence (though circumstantial evidence was quite strong) of the connection with the detention of the Chinese captain existed. The disruption of REE shipments to Japan was highly ambiguous, as it was (a) officially denied by Beijing, (b) a manipulation of the work pattern of the customs officials, (c) introduced in circumstances conducive to supply disruption (i.e. post drastic reduction of REE export quotas). Experts have established several hypotheses but have yet to produce a single convincing explanation.⁴⁹

Diplomatic.

■ **Frequent summoning of the Japanese ambassador:** The Chinese MFA summoned the Japanese ambassador to China six times between 7-14 September, including twice during the first 24 hours following the collision.⁵⁰ On one occasion, the ambassador was summoned after midnight. Such a high frequency of requests can be seen not only as a form of diplomatic escalation, but also as a method of applying personal pressure on the ambassador.

■ **Refusal to conduct meetings discuss the crisis:** Following the collision, China refused Tokyo's proposals for high-level meetings to discuss the situation. Most notably, Beijing rejected Tokyo's proposal to arrange a meeting between their Prime Ministers during the United Nations Summit in New York (20-22 September). A

⁴⁷ The reader should keep in mind the study makes lists adversarial measures which are considered as likely to be applied by China based primarily on the review of secondary sources. However, it does not provide evidence of causality in a scientific sense.

⁴⁸ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 72.

⁴⁹ Including: actual embargo, more "vigorous" implementation of reduced REE export quotas, delayed organic effect of reduced REE export quotas, inherent month-to-month volatility of China's REE exports

⁵⁰ Justin McCurry, "China-Japan Relations Sour as Fishing Boat Dispute Escalates," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 10 September 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2010/0920/China-Japan-relations-sour-as-fishing-boat-dispute-escalates>

brief unofficial meeting at PM level took place on 4 October in Brussels, almost one month after the collision.⁵¹ The first official meeting of officials between the two defence ministries took place on 11 October in Hanoi, Vietnam. Refusal to engage in direct de-escalatory negotiations was likely pressure aimed at encouraging Japan to soften its position (e.g. release Zhan Qixiong, issue an official apology) before the issue could be the subject of a proper diplomatic dialogue.

■ **Suspension of bilateral contacts:** China suspended ministerial and provincial-level contacts with Japan, further deepening diplomatic isolation between the two countries, affecting multiple bilateral initiatives in the political, economic, and cultural domain.

■ **Tolerance of anti-Japanese protests in China:** During the crisis a series of anti-Japanese protests took place across China, mainly during 8-18 September and 16-26 October. The protests were held in front of the Japanese diplomatic missions, but protesters also targeted Japanese schools, businesses, and cultural centres. The intensity and size of the protests was limited. Early protests were small, numbering tens to hundreds of people, but later grew in size, and eventually involved thousands of participants. There were no major acts of violence reported, except for smaller instances of vandalism and symbolic threats, e.g. the burning of Japanese flags, chanting anti-Japanese slogans, passing of written protest notes (e.g. signed petitions, letters of protest), or using ominous symbols (e.g. sending a threatening letter with a bullet). It was clear from the behaviour of Chinese authorities (e.g. moderation of internet forums, temporary detention of activists) and from the tone of articles in state newspapers that Beijing wished to contain the protests to prevent undesired side-effects such as e.g. over-escalation. It is likely that Beijing allowed certain levels of protests, in order to put additional pressure on Tokyo and signal the threat of potential “uncontrolled” escalation. Although it is likely that protests were genuinely spontaneous, they would not have taken place if authorities did not allow them.⁵²

■ **Diplomatic coordination with Russia:** It is likely that there was a degree of diplomatic coordination between China and Russia to increase pressure on Japan. On 27 September, the presidents of China and Russia signed a joint statement calling for a comprehensive deepening of the strategic partnership between both countries.⁵³ Shortly after, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced his intention to visit the Kuril Islands, territory under Russian jurisdiction, but partly claimed by Japan. Medvedev travelled there on 1 November, the first visit of a Russian leader to the islands since the end of the Second World War.⁵⁴ To protest such an unprecedented diplomatic demonstration, Japan recalled its ambassador from Russia. Whether the visit was planned in close coordination with China or not, it was advantageous to the Chinese as it put additional pressure on Tokyo. The visit signalled to Japan that an assertive stance in defending its own claim to a territory (i.e. Senkaku Islands) may be reciprocated against Japan in another dispute (e.g. related to Kuril Islands), where Tokyo is on the opposite side of the dispute (i.e. it is a party questioning the territorial claim of another state). Moreover, many Russian experts have expressed support for China’s position in the 2010 Senkaku crisis.⁵⁵

■ **Diplomatic support for Taiwan:** China was not critical of Taiwan’s efforts⁵⁶ aimed at enforcing its rights to the Senkaku Islands. The Chinese state-run media provided a largely positive coverage of Taiwan during the crisis period, emphasising the need to deepen cross-strait ties. Both countries maintained friendly political exchanges

⁵¹ The meeting took place in the hallway.

⁵² Jessica Chen Weiss, *Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, 4 April 2013, <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Weiss%20Testimony%2C%20April%204%202013.pdf>

⁵³ “China, Russia Look to a ‘New Era’ of Strategic Relations,” *Global Times*, 28 September 2010, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/577933.shtml>.

⁵⁴ RFE/RL. “Japan to Withdraw Ambassador from Moscow Over Island Dispute,” *Radio Free Europe*, 2 November 2010, https://www.rferl.org/a/Japanese-Russian_Leaders_Still_Expected_To_Meet_Despite_Island_Row/2207976.html

⁵⁵ “Japan’s Claim on Diaoyu Islands Distorts Facts, Russian Experts Say,” *People’s Daily Online*, 24 September 2010, <http://en.people.cn/90001/90776/90883/7148682.html>

⁵⁶ For instance, the situation when Taiwan dispatched twelve coast guard vessels to protect the Baodiao activists in their attempt to land on the islands in mid-September.

including the first-ever jointly held search and rescue exercises in the Taiwan Strait,⁵⁷ and a meeting between President Hu Jintao and the honorary chairman of Taiwan's Kuomintang party.⁵⁸ Beijing pursued a policy of selective enforcement of its claims, targeted against Japan while supportive of Taiwan's own efforts to claim the Senkakus.

Information.

■ **Coordinated anti-Japan campaign by state-controlled media:** Chinese state-controlled media presented a unified front during the crisis conveying a narrative supportive of the political line chosen by China in the crisis.

■ **Use of strong diplomatic language:** Japanese actions were vehemently criticised both in statements made by high-ranking officials and in coverage provided by the state-controlled media.

Military.

■ **Use of paramilitary units to challenge Japanese control over Senkaku area:** China did not use conventional military capabilities during the 2010 Senkaku crisis. Instead, Beijing repeatedly dispatched vessels belonging to the Fisheries Law Enforcement Command⁵⁹ to sail into the Senkaku area.⁶⁰ The vessels sailed as far as the contiguous zone⁶¹ around the islands but did not violate territorial waters.

Economic.

■ **Restriction of REE export quotas:** Two months before the beginning of the crisis, Beijing announced a massive reduction of REE export quotas for H2 2010 by 72 per cent (compared to the H2 2009 level). Such a drastic curtailment of critical product supply created a fragile situation for Japanese importers, who were surprised by the severity of the restriction. The situation forced the Japanese side to plead for a relaxation of the export regime at the time when tensions around Senkaku Islands began to flare up.⁶² Furthermore, the reduction of the quota created market conditions conducive to a potential disruption of REE supplies during the second half of the year. There is no doubt that such a drastic and unexpected change of the export regime would facilitate the imposition of informal REE supply restrictions on Japan.

■ **Disruption of REE shipments to Japan:** On 22 September, major news outlets reported that China had halted REE shipments to Japan.⁶³ According to these media reports, Chinese customs officials refused to process new orders and were preventing dockers from loading shipments which were already processed. Chinese authorities repeatedly denied having imposed any additional restrictive measures (i.e. beyond the already announced reduction of REE export quota). Surveys of Japanese businesses conducted by the METI⁶⁴ showed a substantial reduction and disruption of Chinese REE supplies to Japan existing roughly from late September to late November.⁶⁵ However, no conclusive evidence exists that this was a result of additional adversarial measures introduced by China.

⁵⁷ "Mainland, Taiwan Launch rescue Exercise in Taiwan Strait," *Global Times*, 17 September 2010, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/574454.shtml>

⁵⁸ "Hu Jintao, KMT Honorary Chairman Meet on Cross-strait Ties," *Global Times*, 13 November 2010, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/591843.shtml>

⁵⁹ Functional equivalent of coast guard.

⁶⁰ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

⁶¹ The belt of water extending 12 nautical miles beyond territorial waters in which the coastal state can exercise limited level of control mainly to prevent violation of fiscal, customs or immigration law.

⁶² In fact, a delegation of Japanese officials was visiting China to negotiate the REE export quota on September 7, the day when the collision incident took place.

⁶³ Keith Bradsher, "Amid Tension, China Blocks Vital Exports to Japan," *The New York Times*, 22 September 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/23/business/global/23rare.html>

⁶⁴ The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

⁶⁵ Keisuke Iida, *Japan's Security and Economic Dependence on China and the United States: Cool Politics, Lukewarm Economics* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

■ **Threats to Japanese economic interests:** A variety of informal and veiled threats were made, warning that Japanese economic interests in China might be negatively affected by the crisis. Among others, there were calls for boycotting Japanese products, disrupting (through blockade or strike) operations of Japanese businesses located in China, or vandalising Japanese-owned assets. One of the most visible forms of boycott was a cancellation of business and tourist trips to Japan.⁶⁶

■ **Suspension of several bilateral economic initiatives:** As part of their retaliatory measures, China announced a suspension of cooperation on several economic initiatives, including the joint exploration of natural resources in the disputed part of the EEZ in the East China Sea, the increase of passenger flights between both countries and the import of coal from China.

■ **Transport of equipment to offshore platforms in EEZ:** China started to move additional exploration equipment to the offshore platforms located in the disputed part of the EEZ in the East China Sea. Such an activity could have indicated Beijing's willingness to proceed unilaterally with the development of the shared gas resources. In response to Japan's inquiry into the matter, the Chinese side stated it had "every right to be active in the Chunxiao field."⁶⁷ It is unclear whether the explanation was genuine and the timing merely coincidental with the crisis, or whether the activity was deliberately intended to send a threatening signal to Tokyo.⁶⁸

Intelligence.

■ **Use of covert agents in Taiwan:** Following the collision incident, a series of anti-Japanese protests took place in Taiwan. The protests were mainly organised by activists from the organisations representing the Baodiao movement (a social movement supporting China's territorial claims to the Senkaku Islands, which is active mainly in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan).⁶⁹ There was also a spectacular attempt by several Taiwanese activists to sail to the Senkaku Islands, which led to a tense stand-off between vessels of the Taiwanese Coast Guard⁷⁰ and the Japanese Coast Guard.⁷¹ Given extensive links between the Chinese state security apparatus and various Chinese nationalist groups,⁷² it is likely that Beijing played an instrumental role in supporting and organising anti-Japanese protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan.⁷³

Legal.

■ **Detention of four Japanese nationals:** Four Japanese nationals were detained on 20 September in China for allegedly trespassing into a military zone. China released three individuals on 30 September and the last one on 9 October. The dubious character of the charges, and its coincidence with the decision on 19 September by the Japanese prosecutors to extend the arrest of Zhan Qixiong, indicate that the detention of Japanese nationals was a component of Beijing's countermeasures (i.e. tit-for-tat "hostage" taking).

⁶⁶ "Irrked Tourists Skip Japan," *Global Times*, 25 September 2010, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/576960.shtml>

⁶⁷ "China Beefs Up its Offshore Law Enforcement," *People's Daily Online*, 18 September 2010, <http://en.people.cn/90001/90776/90883/7144059.html>

⁶⁸ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

⁶⁹ The Baodiao movement (translated as "Defend the Diaoyu") is considered to be under close supervision and very likely also under significant control of Chinese authorities and as such can be considered an instrument of Beijing's foreign and domestic policy. See: Huang Tun-yen and Jake Chung, "Isle Group Works for China: Source," *The Taipei Times*, 3 March 2013; Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014).

⁷⁰ Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration dispatched 12 (!) vessels to protect the boat carrying Baodiao activists.

⁷¹ Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Taiwan Protests at Japan 'Interference,'" *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010.

⁷² Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014).

⁷³ Huang Tun-yen and Jake Chung, "Isle Group Works for China: Source," *The Taipei Times*, 3 March 2013, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2013/03/03/2003556130>

NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

Critical Functions

Japan's core national security interests are outlined in its National Security Strategy.⁷⁴

Political.

■ **Coverage of Senkaku Islands by the Japan-US security treaty:** The tenability of Japan's claims to Senkaku Islands is contingent to a significant extent on the acknowledgement by the US that the islands fall under the provisions of the TMCS. A lack of explicit support from Washington increases the vulnerability of Senkaku Islands. A hypothetical adversary would see lack of US commitment to defend the islands as a factor lowering the potential cost of aggression.

■ **Enforcement of effective control around the Senkaku Islands:** Ultimately, Tokyo must be able to enforce its territorial claim by being able to impose control over the illegal presence of third-party assets in the Senkaku area. Its ability to effectively police waters around Senkaku demonstrates Tokyo's de facto ownership of the islands. A lack of such an ability undermines Tokyo's claim to the islands.

■ **Ensuring the functioning of domestic political processes:** Japan's ability to effectively respond to challenges depends on preventing and minimising disruptions to the government's work.

■ **Maintenance of constructive relations with Taiwan:** Taiwan represents a crucial regional actor and a potential important ally in the context of growing Chinese influence in the region. Deterioration of relations with Taiwan weaken Tokyo's political position in the region.

Military.

■ **Ensure desired geostrategic position of Japan in the East China Sea:** Though currently demilitarised, the Senkaku Islands represent a military factor affecting the overall geostrategic position of Japan, particularly in the East China Sea region.⁷⁵

Economic.

■ **Stability of the high-tech manufacturing sector:** The Japanese economy is critically dependent on the high-tech industry. Any significant disruption to the industry has serious consequences for Japan's economy, domestic political situation and international standing.

Social.

■ **Maintenance of public order and cohesion of the Japanese society:** Ensuring social cohesion and prevention of civil unrest constitute a fundamental national security objective.

⁷⁴ National Security Strategy, Provisional Translation from Japanese, 17 December 2013, <https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217anzen-hoshou/nss-e.pdf>.

⁷⁵ William Lowther, "US, Japan to Hold Exercise to Recapture Disputed Isles," *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010, <http://www.taipei-times.com/News/front/archives/2010/09/15/2003482881>

Information.

■ **Maintaining credibility of the official narrative regarding the Senkaku Islands:** Tokyo pursues two key objectives regarding the media narrative on Senkaku: (1) Senkaku Islands are legally part of Japanese territory, (2) there are no territorial disputes with regards to Senkaku, (3) Japan is capable of effectively enforcing control over the Senkaku area.

Infrastructure.

■ **Maintaining logistic ability to effectively impose territorial control over the Senkaku area:** Japan's ability to police waters around the islands and ultimately to ensure Japanese sovereignty over the Senkakus is contingent on its technical capabilities to identify potential encroachments, and to dispatch sufficient law enforcement/defence assets to counter potential threats.

Vulnerabilities

Political.

■ **Weakened domestic position of PM Naoto Kan and the ruling DPJ party:** The domestic political position of PM Naoto Kan and his DPJ party was weakened at the onset of the 2010 Senkaku crisis by a combination of several factors (see Context section).

■ **Private ownership of three (out of five) Senkaku Islands:** Only two of five Senkaku Islands were the property of the Japanese state. The remaining three were owned by a private person.⁷⁶ Private ownership may prevent Tokyo from exercising an optimal level of control over the islands, especially given the Senkakus' remote location and lack of established on-the-ground presence of military or law enforcement personnel.

■ **Trilateral and asymmetric nature of the territorial claims:** Japan's claim to Senkaku is contested by both the PRC and the ROC. This creates a risk that Japanese actions aiming to assert its claim to the islands might create a crisis in relations with both Beijing and Taipei. That could in turn lead to the creation of a political platform bringing the PRC and ROC closer together driven by shared anti-Japanese sentiment.

■ **Anti-Japanese sentiment in the region:** The historical issues of Japanese invasions and atrocities committed during the Second World War provide a political constraint on Tokyo's ability and willingness to take a more aggressive stance in international disputes in the region. A potential significant use of military assets to assert its claims over a disputed territory (e.g. the Senkaku Islands) could be met with a negative reaction or outright opposition from countries in the region with which Japan has unresolved territorial disputes. This could lead to an emergence of a common anti-Japanese stance among several regional actors resulting in the political isolation of Tokyo and the weakening of its diplomatic position.

■ **Deterioration of US-Japanese relations following the DPJ victory in the 2009 elections:** The success of the DPJ in 2009 elections brought a significant change to Japanese politics. The party came to power promising significant changes to both domestic and foreign policy. The latter included a redefinition of the political and military relations with the US. The DPJ leader and newly appointed PM Yukio Hatoyama promised to seek a more "equal" relationship with Washington. In September 2009, he made a statement calling for a more independent and Asia-centric foreign policy.⁷⁷ One of the key demands of Hatoyama's cabinet was to

⁷⁶ Julian Ryall, "Japan Agrees to Buy Disputed Senkaku Islands," *The Telegraph*, 5 September 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/9521793/Japan-agrees-to-buy-disputed-Senkaku-islands.html>

⁷⁷ Rajaram Panda, "Controversy over Relocating Futenma Base," *IDS Comment*, 31 October 2009, https://idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/ControversyoverRelocatingFutenmabase_RPanda_311009

open negotiations with Washington on the realignment of US forces in Japan. One of the key, long-standing and particularly thorny issues was the question of the relocation of the USMC Futenma Air Station from Okinawa. This new approach was negatively received by the US government which rejected Tokyo's proposals and demands. This in turn was unfavourably received by a significant part of Japan's political elite and society. The situation improved following the resignation of PM Hatoyama and the appointment of PM Naoto Kan in June. The latter pursued a much more conciliatory stance towards the US. However, even under his leadership, no agreement on the development of a new base for US forces in Okinawa was reached by the time the Senkaku crisis emerged.⁷⁸

■ **Ambiguity surrounding US commitment to defend the Senkaku Islands under the TMCS:** Article 5 of the US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security⁷⁹ (TMCS) commits the United States to defend aggression against territories under Japanese administration. In principle, this blanket statement should also extend the US guarantees to cover Senkaku Islands. However, high-ranking US officials took an ambiguous stance on the issue and avoided voicing US support for the Senkakus under the TMCS in unequivocal terms. Notably, during the 2010 crisis President Obama did not explicitly state that the Senkaku Islands fall under US security guarantees. He only made such a statement publicly four years later.⁸⁰

Military.

■ **Political constraints on using Japanese armed forces:** Japan faces significant formal (i.e. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which severely limits the scope when armed forces can be used) and informal (i.e. consciousness of the historical legacy of militarism) constraints on using military force. This significantly limits Tokyo's ability to actively use its military forces, especially for escalatory purposes and in response to non-military measures used by a potential adversary.

■ **Lack of permanent military infrastructure on the Senkaku Islands:** Japan had no permanent military presence established on the Senkaku Islands.

Economic.

■ **High and quasi-structural dependence on Chinese supply of REE:** Japan is the largest importer of REE from China. In 2010 Japan was a destination for 49 per cent of China's REE exports.⁸¹ These imports covered the bulk of Japan's demand for REE. There were no alternative supply sources available, at least on short- to medium-term basis, to replace the significant supply from China.

■ **Significant economic reliance on China:** In 2009, the value of Japanese exports to China reached almost 20 per cent of total exports, making Beijing top trading partner ahead of Washington.⁸² The degree of Japanese economic dependence on China steadily grew in 2010, including key categories such as export, import, cumulative direct investments and holdings of Japanese sovereign debt by Chinese investors.⁸³ The economic dependency made it more costly and difficult for Japan to engage in a political conflict with China. Actions considered excessively escalatory could be met with internal criticism of business lobbies, which could see their interests threatened and potentially lobby the government to take a more conciliatory stance.

⁷⁸ Gavan McCormack, "The Battle of Okinawa 2010: Japan-U.S. Relations at a Crossroad," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 8, no. 45 (2010): 1-13.

⁷⁹ The treaty was signed in 1952 and later amended in 1960. The agreement provided a legal framework for stationing of US military bases in Japan. It commits both parties to assist each other in case either of them is attacked within Japanese territory.

⁸⁰ Mizuho Aoki, "Obama Assures Abe on Senkakus," *The Japan Times*, 24 April 2014, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/04/24/national/obama-tells-abe-security-treaty-covers-senkakus/#.WgC6GFtSyUk>

⁸¹ Keisuke Iida, *Japan's Security and Economic Dependence on China and the United States: Cool Politics, Lukewarm Economics* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

⁸² Linda Sieg, "Japan Dilemma as Economic Dependence on China Grows," *Reuters*, 2 September 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-china/analysis-japan-dilemma-as-economic-dependence-on-china-grows-idUSTRE6810LQ20100902>

⁸³ Chi Hung Kwan, "The Rise of China and Transformation of Japan-China Relations: Opportunities and Challenges for Japan," *RIETI*, 5 August 2014, <http://www.rieti.go.jp/en/china/14080501.html>

Social.

■ **Presence of militant pacifist and nationalist factions in Japanese society:** There is a strong grass roots pacifist movement in the Japanese society which actively opposes changes to the post-WWII status of Japan as a non-military power.⁸⁴ On the opposite end of the spectrum, there is also a nationalist faction which advocates Japan to take a much more assertive role in the region and globally.⁸⁵ Both groups could be exploited by a potential adversary to limit the margin of manoeuvre and impose political cost on the Japanese government. A real or perceived under-reaction could be seen as “weak-kneed” by the nationalists – a scenario which actually took place during the 2010 Senkaku crisis. A real or perceived over-reaction could be considered as “warmongering” by the pacifists. In the worst case, the government could be, due to different perceptions of the same event, blamed for both under- and over-reacting.

Information.

■ **Asymmetry in the level of control over the domestic media:** Beijing has a significant degree of influence on the domestic information domain, which makes the use of censorship a politically and technically viable option. Meanwhile, the Japanese media domain is open to dissenting internal voices and to information from abroad. This creates an asymmetric situation which may put Tokyo at a disadvantage, since in potential conflicts the Chinese side can present a unified front, while the Japanese media sphere will be divided by a variety of opinions, a number of which likely very critical of the government. This provides a potential adversary with an opportunity to leverage critical voices to its own advantage.

Infrastructure.

■ **Lack of established administrative infrastructure on the Senkaku Islands:** The Senkaku Islands have no established administrative infrastructure which physically demonstrate Tokyo’s claim to the islands.

Threats

Political.

■ **Disruption of the Japanese government:** Chinese actions posed a threat to disrupt and impair the functioning of Naoto Kan’s government. They did so by putting the Japanese government into a delicate position where responding in an adequate and commensurate way was difficult, while potential (real or perceived) over- or under-reaction would likely provoke a domestic political crisis. If Japan decided to indict Zhan Qixiong, the conflict with China would escalate, forcing Tokyo to justify to its internal and external audiences why keeping a Chinese civilian in Japanese prison is worth incurring substantial economic and political costs. A “premature” release would make the government appear weak. A potential domestic political crisis fuelled by the criticism of the government by opposition parties could weaken the Japanese government’s ability (e.g. by distraction or forcing a sub-optimal solution) to effectively manage the crisis with China.

■ **Ambiguous or explicitly negative position of the US towards security commitment to the Senkaku Islands:** Japan faced a threat that Chinese actions might convince the US to distance itself from the crisis and abstain from providing diplomatic support to Japan. Such a situation would lead to the isolation of Tokyo on that specific issue and potentially open the way for even more aggressive Chinese pressure. Japan’s position was further aggravated by Washington’s policy of not explicitly stating its defence commitment to Senkaku.

■ **Delegitimisation of Japan’s claim to the Senkaku Islands by demonstrating Tokyo’s lack of effective control over the area:** The maritime confrontation posed a threat to Tokyo’s *de facto* control over the Senkaku

⁸⁴ Mari Yamamoto, *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-War Japan: The Rebirth of a Nation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

⁸⁵ Sven Saaler, “Nationalism and History in Contemporary Japan,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 14, issue 20, no.7 (2016): 1-17.

Islands. The collision incident demonstrated Japan's problems with effectively policing the area. The increased number of incursions by the Chinese coast guard into the Senkaku Islands' contiguous waters during the crisis was a demonstrative statement of Beijing's challenge to Tokyo's control.

■ **Formation of a unified anti-Japanese front between the PRC and ROC regarding the Senkaku issue:** The trilateral character of the territorial claims to the Senkaku Islands created a threat that Japan's response to Chinese actions might bring Beijing and Taipei closer together in their resistance to Tokyo on the Senkaku issue. Such a situation would isolate Japan politically and create a threat of further deterioration of relations with Taiwan – an important regional actor.

■ **Creation of a political precedent negatively affecting Japan's position in its other territorial disputes:** Mishandling the crisis (e.g. appearing weak, demonstrating a lack of diplomatic competence) might negatively impact Tokyo's political position in other territorial disputes.

Military.

■ **Deterioration of Japan's geostrategic position in the East China Sea:** The crisis posed the threat of China establishing an increased and potentially quasi-permanent presence in the Senkaku area. That in turn could be used as a springboard for undermining Japan's defence position in the Ryukyu Islands.^{86,87}

Economic.

■ **Disruption of Japan's high-tech manufacturing sector:** Prolonged disruption of REE supply would have a major negative impact on the Japanese manufacturing sector. Given the structural lack of alternative supply sources, Japan would be unable to effectively replace China as a supplier of REE in the short- and medium-term.

■ **Drainage of gas reserves from the disputed EEZ in the East China Sea:** Chinese actions suggested that Beijing might begin with the unilateral development of gas fields shared with Japan. Such an action could pose a threat of resources being exploited by Beijing to the detriment of Tokyo.

Social.

■ **Social unrest:** The perceived weakness of the Japanese government in handling the crisis enraged the most nationalistically-mined elements of Japanese society. This resulted in series of vocal demonstrations across Japan.

Information.

■ **Invalidation of Japan's narrative regarding Senkaku Islands:** The crisis posed a challenge to Japan's narrative of "no territorial disputes exist in the Senkaku area." Chinese actions created an empirical reality which directly contradicted Tokyo's official stance.

■ **Tarnished reputation of Japan's government both domestically and internationally:** Mistakes in handling the crisis, both on the domestic and international arena, would have a negative impact on the public image of the Japanese government.

Infrastructure.

■ **Establishment of quasi-permanent law enforcement presence by China within the Senkaku area:** Tolerance of Chinese incursions into the Senkaku area might result in Beijing establishing a quasi-permanent

⁸⁶ A chain of islands belonging to Japan that stretch from Kyushu to Taiwan, of which Okinawa is the most well-known. The Ryukyu area presents an essential geostrategic barrier in controlling China's access to the Pacific Ocean.

⁸⁷ William Lowther, "US, Japan to Hold Exercise to Recapture Disputed Isles," *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010.

presence of para-military units of Beijing's fishermen militias and coast guard. That in turn could be used to validate China's territorial claim to the area and restrict access of Japanese vessels.

Effects

Political.

■ **Transformation of the Senkaku issue into a domestic political problem:** The crisis moved the question of Senkaku Islands from the periphery into the centre of the domestic political debate in Japan. Following the 2010 crisis it was no longer possible for Japanese politicians to trivialise the issue. First, it became an emotionally-loaded issue for the Japanese public and a focal point for media attention. Second, the crisis made it clear that even small-scale incidents might carry the risk of significant escalation.⁸⁸ Overall, the 2010 crisis “has fundamentally altered the status of this territorial dispute, and has created a new basis for understanding the potential consequences of a future incident.”⁸⁹

■ **Immediate and significant deterioration of China-Japan relations:** The most obvious political consequence of the 2010 Senkaku crisis was an immediate and significant deterioration in China-Japan relations. It demonstrated beyond any doubt that the strategy of rebalancing Japan's foreign policy announced in 2009 by then PM Yukio Hatoyama was no longer a viable proposition.⁹⁰ The bilateral relations recovered somewhat following the 2011 Tohoku tragedy, after which China expressed sympathy for the victims and offered assistance to Japan.

■ **Revitalisation of the Japan-US alliance:** As the 2010 Senkaku crisis led to a deterioration of China-Japan relations, it also resulted in the strengthening, after a brief period of deterioration in bilateral relations, of the political-military alliance between Tokyo and Washington. Though the US did not openly side with Japan during the crisis, there were several declarations from high-level American officials reaffirming the important role of Japan as the key US ally in the region and the US' commitment to defend it.⁹¹

■ **Weakening of the political position of PM Naoto Kan and his eventual resignation:** The crisis weakened the political position of PM Naoto Kan. He was subject to significant criticism from the ranks of opposition parties and media commentators. He was primarily blamed for both “escalating the crisis” by consenting to detain Zhan Qixiong and for “showing weakness” by consenting to release him.⁹² The eventual resignation of Naoto Kan in August 2011 was mainly driven by criticism of his handling of the rebuilding effort following 2011 Tohoku earthquake and the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.⁹³ However, his political capital and level of public support were exacerbated by the Senkaku crisis of 2010. The crisis also weakened the political position of the DPJ party, which culminated in its resounding defeat in the December 2012 parliamentary elections.

■ **Catalysing escalatory political rhetoric in Japan:** The 2010 Senkaku crisis set a chain of events in motion, which led to the 2012 Senkaku crisis. The events in 2010 strengthened the nationalist voices and proponents of taking a harder line on China. One of the key initiatives was the proposal for nationalising the three privately owned Senkaku Islands. It was spearheaded by Governor of Tokyo Shintaro Ishihara, who threatened that if the government did not take action concerning the islands, the city of Tokyo would purchase them instead. This

⁸⁸ Sheila. A. Smith, “Japan and the East China Sea Dispute,” *Orbis* 56, no.3 (2014): 370-90.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 373.

⁹⁰ Peter Ford, “Japan Abandons Bid to Make China a Key Pillar of its Foreign Policy,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 17 November 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2010/1117/Japan-abandons-bid-to-make-China-a-key-pillar-of-its-foreign-policy>

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² The decision was formally made by the prosecutor responsible for the case; however, it is widely believed that the decision was the result of political pressure coming from the highest circles of Japanese politics.

⁹³ Justin McCurry, “Naoto Kan Resigns as Japan's Prime Minister,” *The Guardian*, 26 August 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/26/naoto-kan-resigns-japan-pm>

largely forced government's decision to nationalise the islands in September 2012 – a move which sparked a new and much more severe crisis with China. In another example, the LDP (main opposition party at that time) officially included the intention of inhabiting the Senkaku Islands in their electoral manifesto.⁹⁴

Military.

■ **Limited military escalation of Chinese paramilitary in the Senkaku area:** In the year following the 2010 crisis, there were several incidents involving Chinese paramilitary assets in the Senkaku area. The vessels of China's coast guard continued to enter the contiguous zone, but also started to sporadically violate the actual territorial waters around the Senkakus. Overall, the 2010 crisis started a trend of frequent military incidents (both maritime and aerial), but the inflection point came only after the 2012 Senkaku crisis, after which violations escalated and became a permanent rather than sporadic occurrence.

Economic.

■ **Short-term disruption of the Japanese manufacturing sector:** The crisis caused a negative short-term impact to the Japanese manufacturing sector. Some of the most affected sectors were electronics producers, which resorted to emergency measures such as airlifting REE supplies into Japan.⁹⁵ The greatest concern was the looming possibility of REE shortage, which could appear, even assuming introduction of counter-measures (e.g. recycling, substitution), in March or April 2011.⁹⁶

■ **Massive short-term REE price increase, followed by a medium-term decrease:** The crisis rapidly increased REE prices on the global market. The fundamentals of the market were driven by an increasingly tight supply situation reflecting the significant reduction of Chinese export quotas. The China-Japan conflict, the ensuing disruption of REE shipments from China, and media coverage of the "Chinese REE embargo" fuelled speculation, panic buying, and hoarding. For instance, prices of cerium and neodymium increased by fourteen and ten times respectively between mid-2010 and mid-2011.⁹⁷ China already started to relax its export quota policy in 2011, which stabilised the supply-demand situation and started to push the market towards oversupply. The export quotas were completely scrapped at the end of 2014. By that time, the market was suffering from REE glut and low prices resulting in economic distress (e.g. Lynas in Australia) or even bankruptcy (e.g. Molycorp in the US) of some of the major non-Chinese REE producers.

■ **Implementation of a variety of REE supply diversifications strategies:** The crisis forced Japanese public and private economic actors to pursue multiple REE diversification projects. Some of the most notable ones included: increased REE recycling, seeking alternative sources of supply (e.g. US, Australia, India), intensifying undersea exploration, increasing the use of substitutes, and developing further strategic reserves.⁹⁸

■ **Limited long-term impact on China's position as dominant REE supplier to Japan:** Despite negative publicity and diversification efforts of the affected parties, China managed to maintain its position as dominant REE supplier to Japan. In 2015, expert estimates put Japan's dependence on REE from China in the 80-90 per cent range.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Sheila. A. Smith, Japan, China, and the Tide of Nationalism, *CFR Expert Brief*, 19 September 2012, <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/japan-china-and-tide-nationalism>

⁹⁵ Keith Bradsher, "China Restarts Rare Earth Shipments to Japan," *The New York Times*, 20 November 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/20/business/global/20rare.html>

⁹⁶ "Japan's Rare Earth Minerals May Run Out by March: Govt.," *AFP*, 21 October 2010, <https://phys.org/news/2010-10-japan-rare-earth-minerals-govt.html>

⁹⁷ Keisuke Iida, *Japan's Security and Economic Dependence on China and the United States: Cool Politics, Lukewarm Economics* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

⁹⁸ Cindy Hurst, "Japan's Approach to China's Control of Rare Earth Elements," *China Brief*, 22 April 2011, <https://jamestown.org/program/japans-approach-to-chinas-control-of-rare-earth-elements/>

⁹⁹ Keisuke Iida, *Japan's Security and Economic Dependence on China and the United States: Cool Politics, Lukewarm Economics* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2017).



IMAGE – Anti-Chinese government protesters in Tokyo on 2 October 2010.

■ **Relocation of REE processing operations of several large Japanese companies to China:** In the aftermath of the crisis, several large Japanese companies (including Toyota Motor Corporation, Hitachi Metals, TDK Corporation) announced their willingness to relocate at least part of their REE processing businesses to China.¹⁰⁰ The move was driven by a desire to limit the risk of supply disruption by relocating operations closer to the source.¹⁰¹ Undoubtedly, this was one of Beijing's objectives during the crisis, as the exports of processed REE were unaffected (unlike raw REE). It is very likely that Beijing was actively pursuing a two-pronged REE strategy. First, it was discouraging reliance on imports of raw REE, by restricting export quotas and (likely) creating export disruptions during the crisis. Second, it encouraged companies to relocate their processing operations to China by imposing no restrictions on their exports and leaving their supplies unaffected during the crisis.

Social.

■ **Strengthening nationalist and anti-Chinese sentiment in the Japanese society:** The crisis provoked a series of anti-Chinese protests in Japan and fuelled nationalist sentiment among the Japanese public.¹⁰² Apart from extreme elements, the broad Japanese public changed its general perception of China to a more negative one.¹⁰³

Information.

■ **Undermining of Japan's narrative regarding the Senkaku Islands:** The crisis invalidated, in the eyes of the global public, the Japanese narrative that "no territorial issues exist with regards to Senkaku Islands." The events demonstrated that the Senkaku Islands are actively contested between Japan, China, and Taiwan.

■ **Significant amount of negative press coverage of PM Naoto Kan and his government:** The press coverage of the Japanese government during the crisis was more negative than positive. The Chinese media took a very negative stance (as expected). The press in Japan was divided but there was a significant amount of negative coverage.¹⁰⁴ The key global media outlets provided a balanced and moderate assessment, but critical opinions were very visible, e.g. the NYT's article "Japan Retreats With Release of Chinese Boat Captain."¹⁰⁵

■ **Negative impact on the public image of PM Naoto Kan's government:** The handling of the crisis, and especially the vague rationale¹⁰⁶ of releasing Zhan Qixiong, was perceived by elements of the domestic and international audience as signs of political inconsistency and possibly as diplomatic incompetence of the Japanese government.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Yuko Inoue and Julie Gordon, "Analysis: Japanese Rare Earth Consumers Set Up Shop in China," *Reuters*, 12 August 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-rareearth-japan/analysis-japanese-rare-earth-consumers-set-up-shop-in-china-idUSTRE77B3TH20110812>

¹⁰² Yuka Hayashi, "China Row Fuels Japan's Right," *The Wall Street Journal*, 28 September 2010, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704791004575519662349329820>

¹⁰³ Peter Ford, "Japan Abandons Bid to Make China a Key Pillar of its Foreign Policy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 17 November 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2010/1117/Japan-abandons-bid-to-make-China-a-key-pillar-of-its-foreign-policy>

¹⁰⁴ Mark Schreiber, "Weeklies, Tabloids Hawkish over China," *The Japan Times*, 10 October 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Martin Fackler and Ian Johnson, "Japan Retreats with Release of Chinese Boat Captain," *The New York Times*, 24 September 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/25/world/asia/25chinajapan.html>

¹⁰⁶ The decision to release the captain was made by the prosecutor office of the Naha district. However, during the day preceding the release high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials held a confidential meeting with the prosecutors (Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia*, 2017). This led to speculations about the decision to release being made under political pressure from the government.

CONCLUSIONS

Although it is difficult to make definitive statements about the causality of the 2010 Senkaku crisis, this analysis supports the following observations:

- China used a variety of adversarial measures in a skilful and coordinated fashion;
- The escalation pattern was of gradual and adaptive nature, which demonstrated tactical discipline;
- Beijing demonstrated significant political resolve in pursuing a relatively high level of escalation;
- A cumulation of both quasi-structural (e.g. dependence on REE imports from China) and temporary (e.g. domestic political situation) vulnerabilities made Japan an inviting target for potential attack in mid-2010.

These statements suggest with a relatively high level of confidence that the 2010 Senkaku crisis was:

- on strategic level – an element of a broader long-term political strategy;
- on tactical level – an execution of a pre-designed confrontation scenario.

This conclusion can be further strengthened by listing hypothetical objectives, in addition to the officially stated objective of securing the release of Zhan Qixiong, which might have been pursued by China:

1. Strengthen global narrative about Senkaku Islands as “disputed territory;”
2. Provoke Tokyo to overreact;
3. Discourage Tokyo from strengthening its claim to Senkaku Islands (e.g. by building structures on the islands, nationalising the three privately-owned islands, increasing level of military presence in the area)
4. Test Japan’s response and behaviour in a relatively intense political confrontation (i.e. intelligence gathering);
5. Disrupt Japan’s domestic political situation;
6. Creating a “new normal” of increased Chinese presence in the Senkaku area;
7. Achieve a net positive diplomatic impact on relations with Taiwan;
8. Persuade foreign (especially Japanese) companies to relocate parts of their REE processing business to China;
9. Test the actual level of US commitment to defend Senkaku Islands.

Arguably, the 2010 Senkaku crisis allowed China to achieve, to a meaningful extent, the objectives 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Objective number 2 was not realised due to release of Zhan Qixiong.¹⁰⁷ His indictment would likely have led to further escalation (i.e. higher costs) and possibly to pressure from Washington, which would be increasingly unwilling to underwrite a conflict over “a fisherman” with its security commitment. Objective number 3 was not achieved as Beijing failed to discourage Tokyo from nationalising islands in September 2012.

Finally, if one interprets the 2010 Senkaku crisis from the perspective of 2018, it very much resembles an initial engagement used to test the opponent’s defences and potential international reaction. The political tensions

¹⁰⁷ After returning to China, Zhan Qixiong was kept under virtual house arrest until mid-2011, most likely to prevent him from uncontrolled exposure to the media, which could create a risk for the Chinese side (e.g. statements undermining the official narrative).

between China and Japan flared up again in 2012 and remain high, with the Senkakus being one of the focal points of the confrontation. If Beijing decided to pursue a long-term strategy of political confrontation against Japan, the 2010 crisis did look like a skilful transition from “positional play” (2000’s) to an initial adversarial engagement, opening the way to the “middle-game” (since 2012).

Recommendations

■ **Use scenario-based training to be conceptually and operationally prepared for a potential crisis.** The scenario which unfolded during the 2010 Senkaku crisis could have been conceived beforehand with a reasonable degree of accuracy. The event which catalysed the China-Japan standoff, i.e. the ramming incident, was arguably one of the most likely events to occur in the Senkaku area. The scenario presented a clear detain-deport dilemma for the Japanese side. In the “detain path” one could easily model the scenario further into low and high escalation alternatives. The crisis showed that Japan did not prepare a sufficiently robust communication campaign for a scenario of high escalation. Tokyo’s narrative was focused on depicting the Zhan Qixiong case as “domestic violation,” while Beijing reframed the issue as a diplomatic crisis of international proportions (and backed its words with corresponding escalatory actions). Arguably, Tokyo’s narrative was not properly adjusted to the reality of a high intensity crisis. This might have been the result of lack of preparation or improper implementation of the communication strategy.

■ **Identify key communication channels, anticipate likely negative themes and have a response prepared.** A significant amount of international reporting on the 2010 Senkaku crisis was conducted by a handful of news outlets. While journalists are expected to form their own opinion, the government should provide them with first-hand data and comments from key decision-makers. This should ensure that journalists are able to evaluate quality material provided by the government side and thus be aware of the facts and nuances of the situation. It also should help to keep journalists accountable for wilful omissions, misinterpretations or bias.

■ **Plan to incorporate critical voices from neutral or friendly actors.** If the targeted actor represents a democratic entity which allows dissenting or critical voices to appear in public domain, then the government’s communication strategy must take them into account. It is the role of the political opposition and of independent media to scrutinise the government’s actions. It is likely that the central authority will come under domestic criticism during a crisis with an external actor. Although the government cannot prevent the emergence of critical voices at home, it can prepare for them by anticipating the likely line of argumentation, timing of appearance or emotional appeal. One of the key aspects would be to address key concerns voiced by the domestic critics, while simultaneously denying the adversary the possibility to depict the dissent in support of its own position (e.g. through pre-emptive argumentation, highlighting differences in overall political position between domestic critics and the adversary).

■ **Be aware that supporting pieces of information may be used to your disadvantage.** The 2010 Senkaku crisis demonstrated that the context (timing and circumstance) of information release affects how information is interpreted. The understood meaning from information relies heavily on context and can therefore have an unexpected negative effect. The Japanese were in possession of a high-quality recording of the collision incident which clearly showed that the ramming was intentionally performed by the Chinese trawler. However, Tokyo decided not to make the recording public, most likely to prevent the eruption of anti-China sentiment in Japan. When the video was eventually leaked it contributed to the increase of anti-China sentiment and gave another argument to the political opposition that PM Naoto Kan was mishandling the crisis.

■ **Identify and monitor volatile actors.** In almost every situation there are actors which may voice extremist opinions. Such voices have a right to be tolerated under the right to free speech in a democratic society. However, their volatile behaviour and emotionally-charged messages may be highly disruptive during a period of crisis. While the government may not be able to prevent certain actors from voicing their radical views in the public domain, it should still provide the international (and in some cases even domestic) audience with a necessary context. This could help to prevent for instance foreign journalists from quoting an opinion of a well-known controversial figure representing fringe political views as being representative of a broader part of the political spectrum. It seems that Beijing's decision to keep Zhan Qixiong under virtual house arrest following his release was primarily intended to avoid the risk of unpredictable and possibly damaging information being published.

■ **Understand how narratives can be challenged by adversarial actions.** While words can provide context to actions, actions can invalidate words. A narrative which can be easily contradicted by the adversary's actions creates a significant vulnerability. In this case, Japan's position that "No territorial issues exist [in the Senkaku area]" was indefensible, as China's actions quickly proved the contrary. Naturally, one must separate the questions of demonstrating that the issue is politically contested from providing evidence of being on the right side of the dispute. Arguably, China achieved the former but not the latter – although the media attention during the crisis did offer a communication amplifier for Beijing to push its arguments to the international audience, hence facilitating the latter.

APPENDIX

Detailed Timeline

Lead-up to the crisis

August 2009 – Landslide victory of the DPJ party under the leadership of Yukio Hatoyama in elections to the House of Representatives (lower chamber).

October 2009 – The newly appointed PM Yukio Hatoyama (DPJ) makes a public statement on the need for a more equal Japan-US partnership and relocation of USMC base from Okinawa.¹⁰⁸

December 2009 – US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton summons Japan's ambassador to the US over PM Yukio Hatoyama's statements regarding bi-lateral relations.¹⁰⁹

March 2010 – Six PLA-N warships including a Luzhou-class destroyer pass between Okinawa and Miyako Island.¹¹⁰

April 2010 – Ten PLA-N warships including a Kilo-class submarine and a Sovremenny-class destroyer pass between Okinawa and Miyako Islands.¹¹¹

May 2010 – China agrees for negotiations on joint exploitation of gas resources in the disputed EEZ to begin in September.

May 2010 – The new Japan-US agreement on realignment of US forces in Japan is signed. It represents a major compromise on the Japanese side in abandoning the push for relocation of the USMC base in Okinawa.

June 2010 – The government of PM Yukio Hatoyama (DPJ) resigns as his ratings plunge following his handling of the Okinawa issue.

June 2010 – The Emperor Akihito formally appoints Naoto Kan, the new leader of the DPJ, as country's 94th prime minister.

July 2010 – Two PLA-N warships including a Luzhou-class destroyer pass between Okinawa and Miyako Island.¹¹²

July 2010 – China announces a drastic 72 per cent reduction of the REE export quota for the H2 2010.¹¹³

July 2010 – Ruling DPJ party loses 10 seats and majority (together with coalition partners) following poor performance in the election to the House of Counsellors (upper chamber).

August 2010 – Significant increase in the amount of Chinese fishing trawlers operating in the Senkaku area.

August 2010 – Kyodo News report suggests that Obama administration decides not to state explicitly that the Senkaku Islands are subject to the Japan-US security treaty, in contrast to the G.W. Bush administration.¹¹⁴

August 2010 – Ichiro Ozawa declares party leadership and premiership challenge to PM Naoto Kan.

August 2010 – Japanese delegation meets with Chinese officials to ask China to reconsider July decision to drastically reduce the REE export quotas.¹¹⁵

September 2010 – Further increase (from 100 to 306) in the amount of Chinese fishing trawlers operating in the Senkaku area.

¹⁰⁸ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama at the 173rd Session of the Diet*, 26 October 2009, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/hatoyama/statement/200910/26syosin_e.html

¹⁰⁹ John Pomfret, "U.S. Concerned about New Japanese Premier Hatoyama," *The Washington Post*, 29 December 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/28/AR2009122802271.html>

¹¹⁰ Sheila. A. Smith, "Japan and the East China Sea Dispute," *Orbis* 56, no.3 (2014): 370-90.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Sheila. A. Smith, "Japan and the East China Sea Dispute," *Orbis* 56, no.3 (2014): 370-90.

¹¹³ "China Reduces Rare Earth Export Quota by 72%," *China Daily*, 9 July 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2010-07/09/content_10088082.htm

¹¹⁴ "U.S. Fudges Senkaku Security Pact Status," *The Japan Times*, 7 August 2010.

¹¹⁵ "China, Japan Debate Restrictions on Rare Earth Exports," *People's Daily Online*, 30 August 2010, <http://en.people.cn/90001/90778/90861/7122382.html>

Start of the 2010 Senkaku crisis

7 September – Chinese fishing boat intentionally rams two vessels of Japan Coast Guard (JCG). The captain of the fishing boat (Zhan Qixiong) is detained by the JCG together with the 14 crewmembers.¹¹⁶

Japanese ambassador summoned for the 1st time by the Chinese MFA. Meeting with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹¹⁷

Taiwanese fishing boat Hsin Teh Yi No. 186 seized by the JCG for illegal fishing in the area of Senkaku Islands.¹¹⁸

8 September – Japanese authorities decide to arrest¹¹⁹ Zhan Qixiong and charge him under domestic Japanese law with obstruction of JCG in performance of its duty.¹²⁰

Small (30-40 people) and mostly orderly protest in front of the Japanese embassy in Beijing.¹²¹

Japanese ambassador summoned for the 2nd time. Meeting Assistant ForMin Hu Zhengyue who lodges a “strong protest.”¹²²

Taiwanese fishing boat Feng Jung No. 106 seized by the JCG for illegal fishing in the Senkaku area. Released the following day after a fine was paid.¹²³

8-18 September – Beginning of a period of anti-Japanese protests across China (including Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong).

9 September – Japanese ambassador summoned for the 3rd time to meet vice ForMin Wang Guangya.

Zhan Qixiong is handed over to district prosecutor office for potential indictment.

10 September – Local court in Ishigaki district approves the detention of Zhan Qixiong until 19 September, when a decision will be made about potential next steps.¹²⁴

Japanese ambassador summoned for the 4th time to meet ForMin Yang Jiechi.

China announces suspension of East China Sea negotiations on joint development of natural resources and EEZ delimitation.¹²⁵

10-17 September – Vessels of China’s coast guard enter Senkakus’ contiguous waters.¹²⁶

11 September – Chinese and Taiwanese Baodiao activists gather in Taipei to protests recent Japanese actions over Senkaku Islands.¹²⁷

China suspends talks with Japan on joint exploration of the gas and oil resources in the East China Sea.

12 September – China summons, after midnight, Japanese ambassador for the 5th time to meet state councillor for foreign affairs Dai Bingguo.

Japanese school in Tianjin, China, is slightly vandalised during anti-Japanese protests.¹²⁸

¹¹⁶ “Japan, China Tensions Rising Over Boat Collision,” *CBS News*, 7 September 2010, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/japan-china-tensions-rising-over-boat-collision/>

¹¹⁷ Xinhua, “Japanese Ambassador Summoned over Diaoyu,” *China Daily*, 10 September 2010.

¹¹⁸ CNA, “Local, HK Activists Urge Joint Stance over Diaoyutais,” *The Taipei Times*, 12 September 2012, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2010/09/12/2003482694>

¹¹⁹ Japanese law allows for up to 20 days of detention before deciding charges are to be filed.

¹²⁰ Mure Dickie and Kathrin Hille, “Japan’s Arrest of Captain Angers Beijing,” *Financial Times*, 9 September 2010.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Yoko Nishikawa and Ben Blanchard, “Beijing Protests as Japan Arrests China Boat Captain,” *Reuters*, 8 September 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-china/beijing-protests-as-japan-arrests-china-boat-captain-idUSTRE6871BX20100908>

¹²³ CNA, “Local, HK Activists Urge Joint Stance over Diaoyutais,” *The Taipei Times*, 12 September 2012.

¹²⁴ On September 19th the court would decide whether to release Zhan Qixiong, file charges against him or prolong his detention by maximum 10 days.

¹²⁵ Xinhua, “China Postpones E China Sea Negotiation with Japan,” *China Daily*, 11 September 2010.

¹²⁶ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

¹²⁷ CNA, “Local, HK Activists Urge Joint Stance over Diaoyutais,” *The Taipei Times*, 12 September 2012, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2010/09/12/2003482694>

¹²⁸ Wikipedia, “2010 Senkaku Boat Collision Incident,” retrieved from *Wikipedia.com* on 7 October 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_Senkaku_boat_collision_incident#cite_note-41

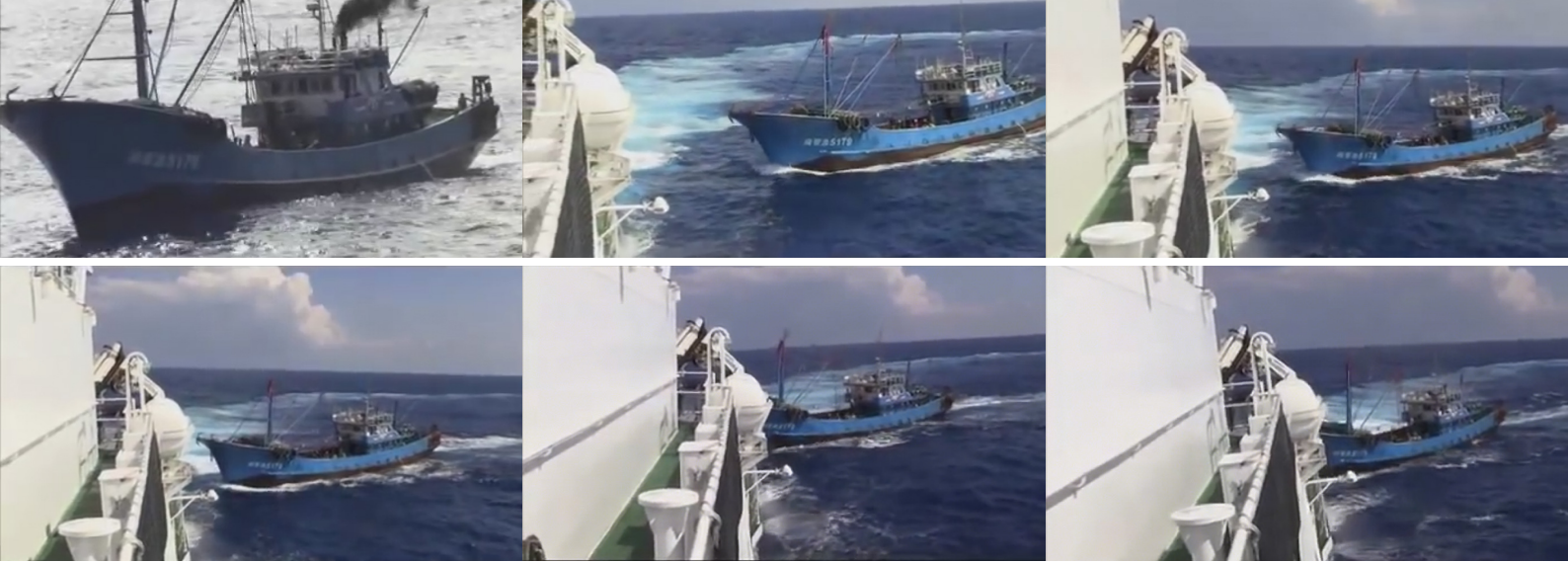


IMAGE SOURCE – The first ramming.

13 September – Japan releases 14 crew members and the trawler.¹²⁹

Japanese Representative to Taiwan summoned by the Taiwanese MFA.¹³⁰

Group of Taiwanese activist sails from Taiwan to Senkaku Islands.¹³¹

Taiwanese authorities prevent activists from Hong Kong and Macau from sailing to the Senkaku Islands.¹³²

Japanese Representative to Taiwan Tadashi Imai lodges protests over Taiwanese authorities permitting the Baodiao activists to sail from Taiwan to Senkakus.¹³³

14 September – China cancels parliamentary exchanges with Japan.

PM Naoto Kan wins DPJ leadership vote against challenger Ichiro Ozawa.¹³⁴

After a five-and-a-half-hour standoff, seven JCG vessels block and then turn away the boat carrying Taiwanese Baodiao activists on board and its escort of twelve Taiwanese coast guard vessels.¹³⁵

Anti-Japanese protest in Taipei, Taiwan.¹³⁶

Chinese MFA summons Japanese ambassador for the 6th time.

First official statement by the US since the start of the Senkaku crisis. Under-Secretary of State Philip Crowley suggests during the daily press briefing that China and Japan pursue bilateral talks to find a solution, calls the crisis a “narrow issue” and downplays need for US involvement.¹³⁷

15 September – Taiwanese MFA distances itself from China over the Senkaku crisis.¹³⁸

17 September – Japanese officials voice questions over increased transports of drilling equipment by Chinese companies to the disputed area in the East China Sea, which might indicate the intent to begin unilateral development.¹³⁹

PM Naoto Kan reshuffles his cabinet. One of the most notable changes: Seiji Maehara replaces Katsuya Okada as Minister of Foreign affairs.¹⁴⁰

¹²⁹ Associated Press, “Japan Frees 14 Crew from Chinese Fishing Boat,” *The Guardian*, 13 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/13/japan-frees-crew-chinese-boat>

¹³⁰ Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Taiwan Protests at Japan ‘Interference,’” *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Activists Scale Down Diaoyutais Plan,” *The Taipei Times*, 14 September 2010.

¹³³ Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Taiwan Protests at Japan ‘Interference,’” *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010.

¹³⁴ Linda Sieg and Chisa Fujioka, “Japan PM Wins Party Vote but Faces More Challenges,” *Reuters*, 14 September 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-politics/japan-pm-wins-party-vote-but-faces-more-challenges-idUSTRE68C59B20100914>

¹³⁵ Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Taiwan Protests at Japan ‘Interference,’” *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ US Department of State, “Daily Press Briefing – September 14, 2010.”

¹³⁸ Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Taiwan Protests at Japan ‘Interference,’” *The Taipei Times*, 15 September 2010.

¹³⁹ Tania Branigan, “China Cuts Japan Contacts over Detained Trawler Captain,” *The Guardian*, 19 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/19/china-japan-contacts-detained-trawler-captain>

¹⁴⁰ “Sweeping Cabinet Reshuffle Marks ‘New Start’ for PM,” *France 24*, 17 September 2010, <http://www.france24.com/en/20100917-japan-new-foreign-minister-named-cabinet-reshuffled-naoto-kan>



IMAGE SOURCE – The second ramming: 7 Sept 2010, Chinese fishing boat intentionally rams two vessels of Japan Coast Guard (JCG). The captain of the fishing boat (Zhan Qixiong) is detained by the JCG, together with the 14 crewmembers. IMAGE – FOOTAGE FROM YOUTUBE

18 September – Intensification of anti-Japanese protests in China (but still relatively non-violent) fuelled by the 79th anniversary of the “Mukden incident.”^{141,142}

19 September – China decides to suspend ministerial and provincial-level contacts with Japan and talks on civil aviation and coal. Chinese tourist agencies begin “spontaneous” boycott of Japan.¹⁴³

Japan threatens retaliatory measures in case China proceeds with unilateral development of oil and gas reserves from the disputed EEZ area in East China Sea.¹⁴⁴

Japanese court extends detention period of Zhan Qixiong by ten days, after which he will have to be released or indicted.¹⁴⁵

20 September – US vice-president Joe Biden speech during US-Japan Council Inaugural Annual Conference hints a more supportive US stance towards Tokyo.¹⁴⁶

Four Japanese nationals working for the Fujita Corporation are arrested in China for allegedly entering a military zone without authorisation and photographing military targets.¹⁴⁷

21 September – Japan’s foreign minister Seiji Maehara and chief cabinet secretary Yoshito Sengoku voice a more conciliatory stance towards Beijing and suggest the possibility of releasing the detained Chinese captain.¹⁴⁸

Premier Wen Jiabao delivers stern public address demanding the release of the arrested captain, threatening Tokyo with further unspecified actions.¹⁴⁹

China unofficially restricts shipment of unprocessed (e.g. salts, oxides, metals) REE exports to Japan. Shipments of semi-processed (e.g. alloys, compounds) REE exports remain unaffected.¹⁵⁰

China rejects Japan’s proposal to arrange a meeting between PM Wen Jiabao and PM Naoto Kan at the UN Summit in New York.¹⁵¹

¹⁴¹ The 1931 Mukden Incident was a plot by Japanese Imperial Army officers that helped provoke the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

¹⁴² Austin Ramzy, “Anti-Japan Sentiment Gains Strength in China,” *Time*, 22 September 2010, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2020721,00.html>

¹⁴³ Bao Daozu, “China Warns Japan of Strong Response,” *China Daily*, 20 September 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-09/20/content_11325545.htm

¹⁴⁴ Tania Branigan, “China Cuts Japan Contacts over Detained Trawler Captain,” *The Guardian*, 19 September 2010.

¹⁴⁵ Xinhua, “Japan Extends Detention of Chinese Skipper,” *China Daily*, 19 September 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-09/19/content_11325363.htm

¹⁴⁶ Joe Biden, Speech at US-Japan Council Inaugural Annual Conference 2010 in Washington, D.C., “U.S.-Japan Council Keynote Speaker Vice President Joe Biden,” *Youtube*, 20 September 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Z5W0AGkEpc

¹⁴⁷ Kyung Lah, “China Arrests 4 Japanese against Backdrop of Diplomatic Battle,” *CNN*, 24 September 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/09/24/china.japanese.arrests/index.html>

¹⁴⁸ Tania Branigan and Justin McCurry, “China Prime Minister Demands Captain’s Release,” *The Guardian*, 22 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/22/china-demands-captain-release>

¹⁴⁹ Ian Johnson, “China Takes a Sharper Tone in Dispute With Japan,” *The New York Times*, 22 September 2010.

¹⁵⁰ Keith Bradsher, “Amid Tension, China Blocks Vital Exports to Japan,” *The New York Times*, 22 September 2010.

¹⁵¹ Xinhua, “China Says Time Not Proper for Meeting between Premier Wen, Japanese Leader at UN Summit,” *People’s Daily Online*, 21 September 2010, <http://en.people.cn/90001/90776/90883/7147621.html>

22 September – Attempts by Baodiao activists from Hong Kong to sail to Senkaku. Blocked by the police.¹⁵² The New York Times reports potential Chinese restriction on REE exports to Japan.¹⁵³

23 September – Spokesperson of China's Ministry of Commerce denies implementing any measures to restrict REE exports.¹⁵⁴

UN summit in New York. The US signals greater diplomatic engagement in the Senkaku/Diaoyu crisis. President Obama meets (in separate meetings) with PM Wen Jiabao and PM Naoto Kan. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reportedly¹⁵⁵ assures Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara during private meeting about the Senkakus being covered by the MCST.¹⁵⁶

Officials from Japan's MFA meet with Naha Special Prosecutors Office (responsible for handling Zhan Qixiong's case). Minutes of the meeting remain confidential.

24 September – Japan releases Zhan Qixiong.¹⁵⁷

24 September - 6 October – Two Chinese coast guard vessels enter Senkakus contiguous waters.¹⁵⁸

25 September – China demands an apology and compensation from Japan for the boat incident. The demand is dismissed in stern language by the Form Min Maehara.¹⁵⁹

28 September – Former PM Shinzo Abe and 100 conservative lawmakers issue a statement criticising the decision to release the captain.¹⁶⁰

30 September – China releases three out of four detained Japanese nationals.¹⁶¹

2 October – Large scale anti-Chinese protests in Tokyo and multiple other locations across Japan against PM Kan's handling of the crisis and China's behaviour.¹⁶²

4 October – Short informal hallway meeting between Chinese and Japanese PMs in Brussels.¹⁶³

7 October – PM Wen Jiabao denies the accusations of REE export restrictions.¹⁶⁴

9 October – The last of the four Fujita employees detained in China is released by the Chinese authorities.¹⁶⁵

10 October – Chinese customs officials temporarily resume processing paperwork for REE shipments to Japan.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵² Cathy Yan, "Hong Kong Activists Fan China-Japan Flames," *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 September 2010, <https://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2010/09/22/hong-kong-activists-fan-china-japan-flames/>

¹⁵³ Keith Bradsher, "Amid Tension, China Blocks Vital Exports to Japan," *The New York Times*, 22 September 2010.

¹⁵⁴ "No Ban' on Exports of Rare Earths to Japan," *China Daily*, 24 September 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2010-09/24/content_11340506.htm

¹⁵⁵ The information is based on Seiji Maehara's statement to the press post-meeting. His remarks were met with distancing comments from the spokesperson of the US Department of State.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

¹⁵⁷ Tania Branigan and Justin McCurry, "Japan Releases Chinese Fishing Boat Captain," *The Guardian*, 24 September 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/24/japan-free-chinese-boat-captain>

¹⁵⁸ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

¹⁵⁹ "Chinese Fisherman Released Amid Tensions," *UPI*, 27 September 2010, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2010/09/27/Chinese-fisherman-released-amid-tensions/36881285583520/

¹⁶⁰ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

¹⁶¹ Chico Harlan, "China Releases Three Japanese Citizens," *The Washington Post*, 30 September 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/30/AR2010093002350.html>

¹⁶² CNN Wire Staff, "China Accused of Invading Disputed Islands," *CNN*, 2 October 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/10/02/japan.anti.china.protest/index.html>

¹⁶³ "Japan PM Kan and Chinese Premier Meet in Brussels," *Reuters*, 4 October 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-china-talks/japan-pm-kan-and-chinese-premier-meet-in-brussels-idUSTRE6935LJ20101004>

¹⁶⁴ Xinhua, "Premier's Speech at the Sixth China-EU Business Summit," *China Internet Information Center*, 7 October 2010, http://www.china.org.cn/world/2010-10/07/content_21072538.htm

¹⁶⁵ "China Frees Last Fujita Employee," *The Japan Times*, 10 October 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/10/10/national/china-frees-last-fujita-employee/#.WhgFP1WnGuk>

¹⁶⁶ Keith Bradsher, "China Restarts Rare Earth Shipments to Japan," *The New York Times*, 20 November 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/20/business/global/20rare.html>

11 October – Chinese and Japanese Defence Ministers meet in Hanoi, Vietnam.¹⁶⁷

12 October – Chinese customs officials halt the processing paperwork for REE shipments to Japan and prevent dockers from loading shipments which were already processed.¹⁶⁸

16 October – Anti-China protests in Japan.¹⁶⁹

16-26 October – Second, more intense, wave of anti-Japan protests in China.¹⁷⁰

18 October – Chinese customs officials suspend REE shipments to the EU and the US.¹⁷¹

19 October – China announces that REE export quotas will be cut by at most 30 per cent in 2011.¹⁷²

21 October – Japan Foreign Minister openly rejects China's claim that the debate about sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands has been "shelved."¹⁷³

Japanese official warns that REE inventories may run out by March.¹⁷⁴

24-25 October – Two Chinese coast guard vessels present in Senkakus territorial waters.¹⁷⁵

28 October – REE shipment processing to the EU and the US is restored by Chinese customs officials.¹⁷⁶

29 October – Meeting between PM Naoto Kan and PM Wen Jiabao which was to take place in Hanoi, Vietnam was cancelled at the last minute by the Chinese side in response to earlier "hawkish rhetoric" of the Japanese Foreign Minister.¹⁷⁷

1 November – Closed-door screening of the video recording of the Senkaku collision for a limited group of parliament representatives.¹⁷⁸

Russian PM Dmitry Medvedev visits Kuril Islands. Tokyo reacts by summoning Russian ambassador.¹⁷⁹

2 November – Japan recalls its ambassador to Russia in protest of PM Medvedev's visit to Kuril Islands.¹⁸⁰

4 November – Video showing the September collision incident between Chinese trawler and JCG vessels is leaked to YouTube.

13 November – Anti-Chinese protests in Japan related to visit of President Hu Jintao to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Yokohama, Japan.¹⁸¹

Meeting on the side-lines of the APEC forum between PM Naoto Kan and President Hu Jintao.¹⁸²

¹⁶⁷ John Ruwitch, "Japan 'Urges China to Set Up Communication System'," *Reuters*, 11 October 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-japan/japan-urges-china-to-set-up-communication-system-idUSTRE69A0D920101011>

¹⁶⁸ Keith Bradsher, "China Restarts Rare Earth Shipments to Japan," *The New York Times*, 20 November 2010.

¹⁶⁹ Guo Qiang, "Thousands Protest Across China and Japan as Nationalistic Sentiment Rises," *Global Times*, 18 October 2010, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/582917.shtml>

¹⁷⁰ Patrick Chovanec, "China-Japan Rare Earth Fracas Continues," *Forbes*, 17 October 2010, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/china/2010/10/17/china-japan-rare-earth-fracas-continues/#285f5ba94885>

¹⁷¹ Keith Bradsher, "China Restarts Rare Earth Shipments to Japan," *The New York Times*, 20 November 2010.

¹⁷² Zhang Qi and Ding Qingfen, "China to Reduce Rare Earth Export Quotas," *China Daily*, 19 October 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2010-10/19/content_11427356.htm

¹⁷³ Kyodo News, "'78 Senkaku 'Accord' Unrecognized," *The Japan Times*, 22 October 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/10/22/national/78-senkaku-accord-unrecognized/#.WhhoJ1WnHIV>

¹⁷⁴ "Japan's Rare Earth Minerals May Run Out by March: Govt," *AFP*, 21 October 2010, <https://phys.org/news/2010-10-japan-rare-earth-minerals-govt.html>

¹⁷⁵ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

¹⁷⁶ Keith Bradsher, "China Restarts Rare Earth Shipments to Japan," *The New York Times*, 20 November 2010.

¹⁷⁷ "Maehara, a Foreign or Defense Minister?" *Global Times*, 1 November 2010, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/588223.shtml>

¹⁷⁸ Ito Masami and Mizuho Aoki, "Senkaku Collisions Video Leak Riles China," *The Japan Times*, 6 November 2010, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/11/06/national/senkaku-collisions-video-leak-riles-china/#.Whh8yVWnHIU>

¹⁷⁹ RFE/RL. "Japan to Withdraw Ambassador from Moscow Over Island Dispute," *Radio Free Europe*, 2 November 2010.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Eric Talmadge, "Thousands Stage Anti-China Protest in Japan," *The Independent*, 13 November 2010, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/thousands-stage-anti-china-protest-in-japan-2133147.html>

¹⁸² "Hu Jintao Meets with Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China*, 13 October 2010, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/hujintaoG20di5cifenghuiheAPEC18cihuiyi_665776/t769272.shtml

19-29 November – REE shipments to Japan are fully restored.¹⁸³

20-21 November – China's coast guard vessels present in the Senkakus' contiguous waters.¹⁸⁴

28-29 November – China's coast guard vessels present in the Senkakus' contiguous waters.¹⁸⁵

Aftermath of the 2010 Senkaku crisis

2011-2012 – Several Japanese companies announce relocation of their REE processing operations to China.¹⁸⁶

August 2011 – PM Naoto Kan resigns.¹⁸⁷

March 2012 – EU, Japan and the US formally request WTO dispute settlement consultations with China regarding REE export practices.

September 2012 – Japanese government announces purchase of three privately-owned Senkaku islands, sparking another diplomatic crisis with China.

September-November 2012 – Period of increased tensions in China-Japan tensions following Tokyo's decision to nationalise three privately owned Senkaku islands. The 2012 Senkaku crisis was in many respects more intense than the 2010 crisis.¹⁸⁸

December 2012 – DPJ loses power after a massive defeat in the elections to the House of Representatives.

December 2012 – Shinzo Abe (LDP) becomes Japan's new Prime Minister.

September 2012 – October 2013 – Massive increase of maritime violations of contiguous and territorial waters around Senkaku Islands by the Chinese vessels.

June 2013 – China begins unilateral development of the gas resources in the disputed part of EEZ in the East China Sea.

November 2013 – China introduces Air Defence Identification Zone which overlaps with the Senkaku territory.

March 2014 – WTO rules against China in REE complaint.

December 2014 – China announces removal of the REE export quotas.

¹⁸³ Keith Bradsher, "China Restarts Rare Earth Shipments to Japan," *The New York Times*, 20 November 2010; Keisuke Iida, *Japan's Security and Economic Dependence on China and the United States: Cool Politics, Lukewarm Economics* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

¹⁸⁴ Michael Green et al., *Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone* (CSIS, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Keisuke Iida, *Japan's Security and Economic Dependence on China and the United States: Cool Politics, Lukewarm Economics* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

¹⁸⁷ Justin McCurry, "Naoto Kan Resigns as Japan's Prime Minister," *The Guardian*, 26 August 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/26/naoto-kan-resigns-japan-pm>

¹⁸⁸ Anti-Japan protests were larger and more violent. Beijing made a massive and continuous use of para-military assets (i.e. coast guard vessels) to assert its claim to Senkaku Islands. However, unlike in 2010 no disruption to REE supplies was reported.

