

# Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands: updates on the Japan-China Territorial Conflit

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## China to map out Senkaku Islands

BEIJING — China plans to conduct a geographical survey of the disputed Senkaku Islands, the state-run Xinhua news agency said Tuesday.

The survey is part of a program to map China’s “territorial islands and reefs,” Xinhua said, citing a state geographical agency.

The program is part of China’s efforts to “safeguard its maritime rights and interests,” the news agency said, without giving a date for the survey or making clear whether it would involve activities on land or be confined to sea.

It quoted Zhang Huifeng, an official with China’s National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation, as acknowledging that the mapping could encounter problems.

“There are some difficulties in landing on some islands to survey, and in surveying and mapping the surrounding sea area of the islands, because some countries infringed and occupied these islands of China,” he said.

The territorial dispute, which has simmered off and on for years, intensified last year when Japan nationalized the uninhabited islets in the East China Sea, triggering anger and protests in China.

Both sides have scrambled fighter jets to the area in recent weeks in a further escalation, though no actual clashes have taken place.

In a related move, U.S. and Japanese fighter jets on Tuesday carried out joint air exercises, an official said, days after Chinese and Japanese military planes shadowed each other near the islets.

The five-day exercise involves six U.S. F/A-18 fighters and around 90 American personnel, along with four Japanese F-4 jets and an unspecified number of people, the official said.

The drill is being carried out over the Pacific off Shikoku.

**AFP-Jiji Press**, Jan 16, 2013

[http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/16/national/china-to-map-out-senkaku-islands/#.UQSWa\\_Kto6g](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/16/national/china-to-map-out-senkaku-islands/#.UQSWa_Kto6g)

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## **U.S. warns China to steer clear of Senkakus**

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has sent a clear warning to Beijing, which lays claim to the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, saying Washington opposes any unilateral action that would weaken Japan's control of the chain.

"Although the U.S. does not take a position on the ultimate sovereignty of the (Senkaku) islands, we acknowledge they are under the administration of Japan," Clinton said, repeating Washington is obligated under the bilateral security treaty to defend the islet group if it comes under armed attack. "We oppose any unilateral actions that would seek to undermine Japanese administration (of the Senkakus)."

It is the first time Clinton has clearly stated Washington's opposition to altering the status quo regarding the isles, whose sovereignty is contested by both China and Taiwan. Japan purchased three of the main islets in September, effectively nationalizing the chain and enraging China.

The strong message from Washington came as Chinese planes and vessels continue to violate Japan's airspace and waters around the uninhabited islets.

Her comments, however, could draw fire from China, which suspects the United States is not taking a neutral stance on the issue.

Clinton also urged Tokyo and Beijing to resolve the dispute through dialogue, saying, "We urge all parties to take steps to prevent incidents and manage disagreement through peaceful means."

**Kyodo Press**, Jan 20, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/20/national/u-s-warns-china-to-steer-clear-of-senkakus/#.UQS1LPKto6g>

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## **Chinese scholar warns on Japan's "fast turn right"**

HONG KONG — A scholar at a Chinese Foreign Ministry think tank warned Tuesday that Japan's political turn to the right must be checked before its negative effects spread through the region.

Ruan Zongze, vice president and a senior fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, said during a luncheon address at Hong Kong's Foreign Correspondents' Club that Japan is "turning right fast" amid its territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

"What it has done in the Diaoyu Islands issue is more than a territory dispute with China," he said, suggesting Japan is turning a blind eye to the international agreements made at the conclusion of World War II by claiming that the disputed islands are its territory.

"Today it will jeopardize China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Tomorrow it will do the same to yours if unchecked," he warned.

**Kyodo Press**, Jan 23, 2013

[http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/23/national/chinese-scholar-warns-on-japans-fast-turn-right/#.UQTRC\\_Kto6g](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/23/national/chinese-scholar-warns-on-japans-fast-turn-right/#.UQTRC_Kto6g)

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## **Senkaku row can be "controlled": Chinese envoy, academic predict swift resolution**

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND — A top Chinese diplomat has expressed hope that the dispute over the Senkakus can be "controlled" soon and a leading Chinese academic predicted the issue could be settled within two years, while attending the annual World Economic Forum.

Ambassador Liu Zhenmin, China's envoy to the United Nations in Geneva, on Friday told a session on the sidelines of the global gathering in Davos, Switzerland, that Beijing hopes the new government in Tokyo will face up to historical reality "and take the right measures to overcome the difficulty in relations with China, and bring relations back on the track of normal development."

Meanwhile, Yan Xuetong, dean of the Institute of Modern International Relations at Beijing's Tsinghua University, said he had "great confidence" the two countries will be able to resolve the clash over the Japan-controlled islets without the need for outside help. "I think that they can settle down this dispute within two years," Yan said.

Tensions between Tokyo and Beijing soared after the previous Democratic Party of Japan government purchased three of the Senkaku islets, claimed by China as Diaoyu, from their private Saitama Prefecture owners in mid-September, effectively nationalizing the chain. The islet cluster is surrounded by rich fishing grounds and a potential wealth of gas, oil and other undersea resources in the East China Sea.

Ambassador Liu condemned the move, arguing it "seriously encroached upon China's sovereignty." But he wouldn't be drawn on a time frame for resolving the rival claims, saying only, "I hope the dispute over Diaoyu will be controlled soon, but I don't know how long it will take."

But he added: "There are many options for peaceful solution. There might be a negotiated settlement, but also there are some other results possible."

Yan, who also serves as a consultant to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, said he thinks "shared interest will bring China and Japan to settle down their dispute because I think the value of these

islands is not (as) much as the other interests of the (two) countries.”

Both sides have called for dialogue to avoid armed confrontation, although Tokyo has rejected Beijing’s demand that it reverse its official stance and acknowledge that the Senkakus’ sovereignty is also claimed by China.

AP, Jan 26, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/26/national/senkaku-row-can-be-controlled-beijing/#.UQT1lPKto6g>

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### **China’s latest incursion longest yet; envoy called: Senkaku intrusions seen as testing Abe**

Beijing may be testing the patience of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has recently kept his hawkish streak in check as he instead focuses on domestic economic measures.

On Monday and Tuesday, four Chinese maritime survey ships stayed inside Japan’s territorial waters around the Japan-controlled Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea for more than 13 hours, the longest Chinese intrusion since September, drawing another strong protest from Tokyo.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga called the lengthy intrusion “extremely abnormal” and said the government lodged a “even stronger” protest with China over the repeated violations by its government ships into the territorial waters around the islets, which are claimed by Beijing, where the islets are known as the Diaoyu.

“We have repeatedly lodged protests through diplomatic channels and demanded that the ships exit, but they roamed” inside Japan’s territorial waters, Suga told reporters Tuesday. “(The intrusion) is extremely abnormal and very regrettable.”

But when asked if Japan plans to take any tougher action to guard the nation’s claim to the uninhabited islets other than having Japan Coast Guard ships cruise next to the Chinese vessels, Suga just said Tokyo will firmly deal with the situation and demanded restraint by Beijing.

Later the same day, Deputy Foreign Minister Akitaka Saiki summoned Chinese Ambassador Cheng Yonghua and lodged a formal protest, demanding that Beijing “never repeat” similar incursions. Cheng said he could not accept the protest and would convey the statement to Beijing, the Foreign Ministry said.

The hawkish Abe had once argued that Tokyo should station government officials on the Senkakus, an action that could be seen as militarily provocative.

But he has recently dialed down the rhetoric and not mentioned tough actions to defend the Senkakus while he pursues domestic economic remedial measures with an eye to the July Upper House election, which he hopes his ruling Liberal Democratic Party will be able to re-establish a majority in the chamber and hence have a clearer public mandate for his policies.

The four Chinese ships entered Japanese waters between 11:02 a.m. and 11:43 a.m. Monday and

exited at 12:32 a.m. Tuesday.

**Reiji Yoshida**, *Japan Times* Staff Writer, Jan 9, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/09/national/senkaku-intrusions-seen-as-testing-abe/#.UQOJPfKto6g>

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## **China sends fighter jets to shadow F-15s: State-run paper warns nations near threshold of confrontation**

China scrambled two J-10 fighter jets to the East China Sea on Thursday to monitor a pair of Air Self-Defense Force F-15s that were shadowing one of Beijing's patrol aircraft, the Chinese Defense Ministry reported on its website.

The Chinese aircraft was conducting routine patrol duties near oil and gas fields east of the coastal city of Wenzhou, the ministry said in a statement posted online Friday.

The ASDF's F-15 fighters "trailed and interfered with" the Chinese planes, which were conducting regular military patrol exercises, the ministry said, arguing Thursday's incident underscores the alleged increased surveillance activities by the Self-Defense Forces against China.

The Chinese J-10s also monitored a Japanese reconnaissance plane in the same airspace, it said.

China will "resolutely defend the safety of its territorial air space and the rightful privileges under international law," the ministry stressed.

The incident marks a further escalation in the dispute that erupted between the two countries in mid-September over the Senkaku Islands. The uninhabited islet cluster in the East China Sea is administered by Japan, but China also claims the chain, which it refers to as Diaoyu.

"China and Japan may stand at a turning point that leads to confrontation," China's state-run *Global Times* newspaper said in an editorial Friday. "The resentment toward each other has come to the highest level since World War II. The Sino-Japanese relationship is looking dim."

Hong Lei, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, meanwhile used a press briefing in Beijing the same day to pin the blame for the "current difficulty" between the two sides squarely on Japan.

Relations between the world's second- and third-biggest economies went into a severe tailspin after the ousted Democratic Party of Japan-led government purchased some of the islets Sept. 11 from their Japanese owner, a businessman in Saitama Prefecture. Despite calls for calm and restraint from both countries, the repercussions show no sign of letting up.

**Bloomberg**, Jan 13, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/01/13/national/china-sends-fighter-jets-to-shadow-f-15s/#.UQOmQPKto6g>

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## **Defiant Chinese plane intrudes over Senkakus**

A Chinese plane intruded into Japanese airspace Thursday over the Japan-controlled, but China-claimed, Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, Chief Cabinet Secretary Osamu Fujimura said.

The Air Self-Defense Force scrambled F-15 jets to the area after the Chinese Oceanic Administration airplane was spotted near the islet of Uotsuri at 11:06 a.m., Fujimura told reporters.

The government immediately lodged a protest with China over the incident, Fujimura said.

He said it is "extremely deplorable" that the plane entered Japanese airspace despite repeated warnings, especially after Chinese surveillance ships intruded into Japanese waters earlier Thursday.

Vice Foreign Minister Chikao Kawai summoned a Chinese envoy to the Foreign Ministry to lodge a protest.

In Beijing, officials said the move was part of Chinese patrols in the area.

**Kyodo Press**, December 14, 2012

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20121214a3.html>

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## **Chinese plane intrusion over Senkakus worries U.S**

WASHINGTON - The United States has voiced concern after a Chinese state-owned plane breached Japanese airspace over the Senkakus for the first time on record, overflying the uninhabited islets at the heart of a bitter bilateral row.

"It's important to avoid actions that raise tensions and to prevent miscalculations that could undermine peace, security and economic growth in the region," U.S. State Department acting deputy spokesman Patrick Ventrell said Friday.

Washington has raised its concerns with Beijing, Ventrell said, adding the United States made clear that its "policy and commitments regarding the Senkaku Islands are long-standing and have not changed." U.S. officials have also spoken with the Japanese government, he added.

Japan scrambled eight F-15 fighter jets Thursday after detecting the first incursion by a Chinese government aircraft into Japan's airspace above the Senkaku chain since monitoring began in 1958, the Defense Ministry reported.

Observers suggest the move was part of a campaign by China to create a "new normal," in which its forces can come and go as they please around the Japan-controlled isles, which Beijing calls Diaoyu

and has claimed since the 1970s.

The incident appeared to pass without any direct confrontation.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said the flight had been routine, with spokesman Hong Lei saying, "China's maritime surveillance plane flying over the Diaoyu islands is completely normal." China requires the Japanese side to stop illegal activities in the waters and airspace of the Diaoyu, "Hong said, reiterating Beijing's assertion that they have been "China's inherent territory since ancient times."

**AFP-Jiji Press**, December 16, 2012

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20121216a9.html>

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## **China condemns Senkaku amendment to U.S.-Japan security treaty**

BEIJING - China on Monday branded the U.S.-Japan security treaty "a product of the Cold War" after Washington reaffirmed its commitment to Japan in the Senkaku dispute.

The amendment, attached to the National Defense Authorization Bill, noted that while the United States "takes no position" on the ultimate sovereignty of the disputed territory, it "acknowledges the administration of Japan over the Senkaku Islands."

The "unilateral actions of a third party" will not affect its position, it added.

The legislation passed last week reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to Japan under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security and warned that an armed attack against either party "in the territories under the administration of Japan" would be met in accordance with its provisions.

The islands in the East China Sea are called Diaoyu in China and Tiaoyutai in Taiwan.

"The Chinese side expresses serious concern and firm opposition to the U.S. Senate's amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act," foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters.

"The Diaoyu islands and affiliated islands have been China's inherent territory since ancient times. China has indisputable sovereignty over them."

Hong said the legislation violated Washington's repeated pledge to not take sides in the dispute.

"The U.S.-Japan security treaty is a product of the Cold War and should not go beyond the bilateral scope or undermine the interests of a third party," Hong said.

"We hope the U.S. side will bear in mind the broader interests of peace and stability in the region, honor its words with actions and refrain from sending self-contradictory, wrong signals."

The sovereignty of the islets has been a source of friction for decades, but the row erupted earlier this year after then-Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara made a bid to buy them for the city from their Japanese owners and thus cement Japan's sovereignty claim. The ploy forced the central government to nationalize them.

Chinese vessels have been spotted in and around the territorial waters every day for the past month. All sides publicly refuse to back down on their respective claims to the Japan-controlled islets.

**AFP-Jiji Press**, December 4, 2012

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20121204a5.html>

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