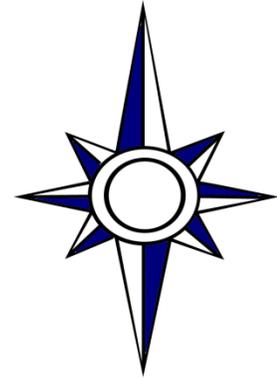


# Comparative Connections

A Triannual E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations



## Japan-China Relations: Gaining Traction

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Despite ongoing discussions of history and present-day issues related to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, there was a general sense in both Tokyo and Beijing that relations were slowly moving in the right direction. Meetings took place between senior diplomats and political leaders. Slowly gaining traction, engagement culminated in the April 22 Xi-Abe meeting in Bandung, Indonesia, featuring smiles, handshakes, and a 25-minute talk – a far different picture of the relationship than that presented at the November meeting in Beijing. However, Xi and other Chinese officials consistently made it clear that progress in restoring relations would depend significantly on Japan’s proper understanding of history, in particular Prime Minister Abe’s much anticipated statement commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war.

### **History: commemorative events in Beijing**

At the end of January, Japanese media reported that China’s leadership was developing plans for commemorative events to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of victory in the anti-Fascist war, including a large-scale parade to which the world’s leaders would be invited. In March, Japanese media, sourcing government officials, reported that an invitation had been extended to Prime Minister Abe Shinzo.

China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson announced on March 24 that invitations had been extended “to leaders of all relevant countries and international organizations.” Pressed whether Japan was among the invited, she replied “Do you think that Japan has a connection to World War Two and the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, or not?” On the following day, China’s Ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua, speaking to members of the Japan-China Friendship League of Parliamentarians, assured his audience that the events marking China’s victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan, “are not aimed at present day Japan or its people, rather the objective is to commemorate history and those who lost their lives during the war and by emphasizing the importance of peace, open to the future.” At the same time, Cheng noted that China would be carefully watching how Japan reflected on history.

Asked whether Prime Minister Abe would attend the events in China, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide said that he wanted to refrain from comment. However, former Prime Minister

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\* The views expressed in this article are the views of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the views or policy of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or the US government.

Murayama Tomiichi, in interviews with *Phoenix Television* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, expressed his intention, if possible, to attend the September commemorative ceremonies in Beijing.

### **History: Abe's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary statement**

On Jan. 1, Emperor Akihito released his New Year message. Among his New Year's Thoughts, the emperor wrote "I think it is important for us to take this opportunity to study and learn from the history of this war, starting with the Manchurian Incident of 1931, as we consider the future direction of this country." In its January edition, *Xinhua* quoted Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Liu Jianchao as saying that the coming year would hold the key to China-Japan relations and calling for step-by-step improvement to return the path of advantageous development.

At his first press conference of the year on Jan. 5, Prime Minister Abe said that the statement to be issued by his government marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war would be written "by collecting wisdom, including remorse over World War II, steps Japan has taken as a pacifist nation after the war and what kind of contributions Japan will make to the Asia-Pacific region and the world." He went on "As I have been saying all along, the Abe Cabinet upholds the position on recognition [of Japan's wartime activities] outlined by previous administrations in its entirety, including the Murayama statement. Moreover, we will uphold this position." Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a television audience that the government would inherit "in their entirety" the statements of the Murayama and Koizumi governments issued at the 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the end of the war.

Asked to comment on the Emperor's "thoughts" and the prime minister's remarks, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson responded that "We follow closely what attitude the Japanese government and leaders adopt and what message they send when it comes to the history of aggression. Are they trying to water down that part of history...Or do they prefer to travel lightly by sincerely and profoundly reflecting upon the history of aggression? The international community is watching..." The remarks served as the leitmotif of Chinese diplomacy toward the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary statement.

On Feb. 23, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, acting as president of the UN Security Council, opened the debate on the agenda item "Maintaining International Peace and Security." Taking the opportunity, Wang called attention to the coming 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war against Fascism and observed the continuing existence of those who attempt to deny the reality of history and aggression of the past. Japan's Ambassador Yoshikawa Motohide replied that Japan, based on its deep reflection on the war, had followed the path of a peace-loving country, emphasizing freedom, democracy and rule of law in support of international peace and security. Japan would continue on that path "without change."

On March 3 PM Abe told the Lower House Budget Committee that "I am absolutely not a revisionist." But he went on to acknowledge that his use of the term "emerging from the post-war regime" had caused misunderstandings abroad, adding that he intended it to apply only to domestic politics and not to challenge the postwar international order. Abe returned to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary statement during a March 5 press conference in Mie Prefecture, repeating the

formulation, articulated in his Jan. 5 press conference of “inheriting in their entirety the positions of previous cabinets with regard to understandings of history.”

On March 15, Premier Li Keqiang at a press conference marking the conclusion of the National People’s Congress, said that looking toward the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Japan’s leaders “must not only accede to the achievements of past leaders but also bear the responsibility of history for the criminal acts of previous leaders.” Li asserted that the origin of difficulties related to whether Japan would preserve a correct understanding of the war and history; the coming year would test the relationship. As for the Abe statement, China would be looking for the inclusion of the words of the Murayama statement, in particular deep reflection and remorse with respect to colonial rule and aggression. Also during the National People’s Congress, Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the National Committee of the People’s Consultative Conference, announced that China would release records of the war with Japan as part of its commemoration of the World War II anniversary. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga replied that “at this time particularly reflecting only on the past is not constructive in terms of the Japan-China relationship.”

On March 27, Ambassador Cheng told a press conference that China and other Asian countries victimized by the war would be watching with concern Abe’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary statement. Asked what China would be looking for in the Abe statement, Cheng replied: a commitment to observe previous positions and promises, as reflected in the Murayama statement, acknowledging colonial rule and aggression in the words of Murayama statement, as well as deep reflection and remorse over the responsibility for the severe injuries caused to the Chinese people.

During an April 20 *BS Fuji* program, PM Abe expressed his thoughts with respect to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary statement – whether the wording of the Murayama and Koizumi statements would be included. Abe noted that his basic understanding of history would continue but after saying “‘continuity’ there is no need to write that again.” What he wanted to do was to express his own thinking. If he were to say the same thing with respect to colonial rule and aggression, “there would be no need for a new statement.” Two days later, Ambassador Cheng told a Tokyo audience that attention would be paid to the language Abe would use, but that China was making no specific request as to the words to be used in the statement.

### **High level interaction: diplomats**

On March 19, Senior Japanese and Chinese Foreign Ministry and Defense officials met in Tokyo to resume, after a four-year hiatus, the Japan-China Security Dialogue. Deputy Foreign Minister Sugiyama Shinsuke and Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin led their respective delegations. Discussion focused on the importance of an air and maritime liaison mechanism to deal with unforeseen incidents; the two sides, however, did not agree to a start date to implement the mechanism. Afterward, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official told reporters that “Both sides agreed that the tide is turning for the better ... following the summit. They also agreed that it is important to keep on taking positive steps in various areas and at various levels to firmly establish this trend.”

On March 21, Chinese, Japanese and Korean foreign ministers met in Seoul, the first meeting of the ministers in three years. At the conclusion of the meeting the three ministers agreed to hold a

three-way summit “at the earliest convenient time.” During a post-conference press conference, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that much depended on Japan’s coming to terms with its past, noting that “the war has been over for seventy years, but the problem with history remains a present issue, not an issue of the past.” Wang said that at present there is “no schedule” for a trilateral summit, that it was first important “to create the necessary conditions.”

In a separate meeting between Kishida and Wang, Kishida proposed steps to improve relations based on the November Abe-Xi meeting – expansion of political, economic, and cultural exchanges. Kishida also called on China to cease its incursions into Japanese waters in the Senkakus. As for a Xi-Abe meeting, Kishida called for an earliest possible meeting without preconditions. Wang said that it would be difficult in advance of ceremonies marking the end of the war. Wang noted the importance and sensitivity of the coming anniversaries and emphasized that China would be watching to see how Japan dealt with the issues of history.

### **High-level political interaction returns**

More hints of normalcy returned to the relationship with a series of meetings between senior party officials. On March 19, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Tanigaki Sadakazu and Komeito Secretary General Inoue Yoshihisa met Prime Minister Abe at the Kantei in advance of their March 23-25 visit to Beijing. The political leaders discussed the expected interest of their Chinese interlocutors in the Prime Minister’s Aug. 15 statement commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war. On March 23, Tanigaki and Inoue, leading a group of parliamentarians, met for approximately one hour with Yu Zhengsheng, the fourth-ranking official of the Chinese Communist Party. Yu told them that “Sino-Japanese relations are currently improving. The force is not strong yet, but it is heading in a good direction.” To continue making progress, Yu said that it was important for Japan to deal properly with the issues of history and asked for inclusion of the language of the Murayama statement. Tanigaki replied that the content of Abe’s Aug. 15 statement should not be a concern for China since “[Japan’s] stance as a pacifist nation, our regret for the war never changes,” but that they would report Chinese concerns to the prime minister. He told Yu of the Japanese hope to resume exchanges between ruling parties. Tanigaki also asked for Chinese restraint in the Senkakus. According to LDP and Komeito participants a discussion of history and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands took up more than half the meeting.

On March 24, the Japanese leaders met for approximately one hour with Wang Jiarui, head of the CCP’s International Department. During the meeting, Inoue observed that even if there have been times in the past when conditions disrupt dialogue between the governments, dialogue between the political parties is important. Wang replied that, as political leaders not under diplomatic instructions, if the two sides are able to honestly speak from their hearts, the results would be positive. Wang, however, did raise issues related to history and asked that Japan consider the feelings of the Chinese people who were victims of the war. At the conclusion of the meeting the two sides agreed to resume exchanges between ruling parties that had been suspended since 2009 and that first meeting would take place later this year in the capital of one of the Chinese provinces. That evening, Tang Jiaxuan, head of the China-Japan Friendship Committee, hosted a dinner for the Japanese delegation at the Daiyou Tai guest house. Tang welcomed the resumption of party-to-party talks and emphasized the importance China attaches

to relations with Japan. Tanigaki replied that he wanted the reopening of the party-to-party mechanism to open the road to the profitable development of bilateral relations.

On their return to Tokyo, Tanigaki and Inoue briefed Abe on their trip. Afterward Tanigaki told reporters “It’s not enough yet, but we’re moving in the right direction ever since the informal summit between Japanese and Chinese leaders. We were able to confirm the basic thinking that they want to keep heading in that direction.”

A delegation of representatives from the China’s National People’s Congress reciprocated with an April 8-11 visit to Tokyo to meet Japanese counterparts. The visit by senior Chinese political figures was the first since Japan’s nationalization of the Senkakus. On April 8, the delegation met Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Okada Katsuya. Afterward, Okada told reporters that the Chinese had called on Japan to learn from history and not to repeat the mistakes of the past. On April 9-10, the delegation met their Japanese counterparts in the Diet building. In a meeting with Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, the Chinese referred to the Xi-Abe meeting at APEC as setting a foundation on which to improve relations and break through current difficulties.

On April 14, Premier Li Kqiang met former Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei and a delegation from the Japan Association for the Promotion of International Trade. Li praised Kono for his “courage and sense of responsibility” as a political leader, observing to reporters that Kono had evidenced a “correct” understanding of history. Li went on to observe that the key to improving relations “lies in how Japan handles and deals with historical issues,” underscoring the Kono and Murayama statements as “basic underlining policy essentials for the Japanese government to correctly perceive history.” Kono replied that “it is important to develop mutual understanding by repeatedly talking with each other and to clear obstacles with diplomatic wisdom.” The Li-Kono meeting marked the first time that Li had met with a Japanese delegation since nationalization of the Senkakus.

### **Xi-Abe meet in Bandung**

Prime Minister Abe and President Xi met for 25 minutes on April 22 in Bandung, Indonesia at the Asian-African Summit. Afterward, Abe told reporters that the meeting was “extremely significant” and that the two leaders had agreed to advance dialogue at various levels including youth exchanges, that he wanted to make certain the current trend of improving relations continued, and that by taking advantage of various international conferences, he wanted to make every effort to develop the bilateral relationship. Xi noted a “certain degree” of improvement in relations between the two countries attributing it to joint efforts of both sides; Abe agreed. As for history, Xi made clear that a proper understanding was an important principle which serves as a political foundation of the relationship. Abe said that his government has adhered to the overall interpretation of history set out by previous governments, including the 1995 Murayama statement and Koizumi’s statement in Bandung in 2005.

In Beijing, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson commented that “the meeting has charted the course for the improvement and development of China-Japan relations in the next step.” In Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga agreed the meeting showed “a desire to improve relations.”

## **Senkaku/Diaoyu islands: maps and claims**

During the Lower House Budget Committee meeting on Feb. 23, LDP member Harada Yoshitake, introduced a map of the Senkakus that he had received from a Japanese diplomat. The map, published in 1969 by China's State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, identifies the Senkakus in Japanese characters. Foreign Minister Kishida considered the map "valuable data" to be used "strategically" to reinforce Japan's claim to the islands. The following week, on March 4, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters that the website of the Chinese Coast Guard refers to the islands in both Japanese and Chinese characters as Chinese territory was "a distortion of reality" and could not be entertained. Suga went on to say that the government had issued a diplomatic protest calling on China to remove the reference.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson reiterated China's claim to the islands as part of China's "inherent territory." She went on to observe that "facts are facts, and the objective fact will not change whether the Japanese side is or is not willing to accept it." China was using the website "to help people grasp a better understanding of the historical background and China's consistent position...." China "does not accept the unreasonable request of Japan...."

The Japanese Foreign Ministry posted Harada's map on its website on March 16. Citing the map as evidence of Japan's claim to the Senkakus, Harada called on China to "immediately stop its illegal activities" in the islands. Harada subsequently met PM Abe to discuss an LDP resolution calling on China to cease its intrusions into Japan's territorial waters. Beijing's Foreign Ministry spokesperson responded by saying said that he had not seen the map but emphasized that "the Diaoyu Dao and its affiliated islands are China's inherent territory, and this is an indisputable fact backed by sufficient historical and jurisprudential evidence.... No one can deny this historical fact by wasting their contrivances on one or two maps." He was prepared to provide "one hundred, even one thousand maps that clearly mark the Diaoyu Dao as Chinese territory."

On March 23, the Japanese Foreign Ministry cited Chinese documents from 1893, the period before the Sino-Japanese war that did not claim the Senkakus as Chinese territory to demonstrate that present-day Chinese claims lacked any standing. Foreign Minister Kishida saw the 1893 map and documents as contradicting China's present-day claims. On April 7, the Japanese government announced its intent to develop a public database of documents, maps, and photographs substantiating Japan's position on the Senkakus and other territorial issues. China's spokesperson replied "there are innumerable historical materials from home and abroad to prove that China is the first to have discovered the Diaoyu Dao and has exercised long-term and effective control over the island." She added that it is Japan, "who struggles to deliberately misinterpret that material that it has got in disregard of the integrity of history."

## **Senkaku/Diaoyu operations**

Meanwhile, the Chinese Coast Guard continued its robust efforts to establish its presence in the region of the Senkakus/Diaoyus through regular patrols.

**Jan. 5-16:** *Haijian 2115, 2151, 2337* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near the Senkaku Islands; on Jan. 9, these vessels enter Japan's territorial waters.

**Jan. 19-20:** *Haijian 2102, 2305, 2306* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands; on Jan. 19, the ships entered Japan's territorial waters.

**Jan. 23-27:** *Haijian 2305, 2306, 2102* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands; *2305* and *2306* enter Japan's territorial waters on Jan. 27.

**Feb. 2-4:** *Haijian 2113, 2166, 2350* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands.

**Feb. 6:** *Haijian 2113* and *2350* enter Japan's territorial waters near Senkaku Islands.

**Feb. 9-28:** *Haijian 2337, 2401, 2506* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands.

**March 6-8:** *Haijian 2101, 2305, 2307* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands.

**March 10-22:** *Haijian 2102, 2306, 2350* operate within Japan's contiguous zone; on March 16 and 23, the ships entered Japan's territorial waters near Senkaku Islands.

**March 28-April 1:** *Haijian 2101, 2306, 2350* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands; on March 30, the vessels enter Japan's territorial waters.

**April 4:** *Haijian 2113, 2401* enter Japan's territorial waters near Senkaku Islands.

**April 8-16:** *Haijian 2113, 2401, 2506* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands.

**April 17:** *Haijian 2307, 2337, 2101* enter Japan's territorial waters near Senkaku Islands. When asked by the Japanese Coast Guard to leave Japanese waters, they reply in both Chinese and Japanese that the Japanese ships had entered Chinese waters and to depart immediately.

**April 22-27:** *Haijian 2101, 2307, 2337* operate in Japan's contiguous zone near Senkaku Islands.

**April 30:** *Haijian 2101, 2102, 2307* enter Japan's territorial waters near Senkaku Islands, ignoring warnings not to enter. The incursion was the 12<sup>th</sup> of the year.

## Security

On Jan. 12, Japanese and Chinese defense and coast guard officials met in Tokyo to discuss issues related to a maritime crisis management mechanism. The two sides agreed to set up an air-sea mechanism and discussed technical issues to bring it into operation as early as possible. Afterward, Defense Minister Nakatani Gen told reporters that the two sides were able to reach common understandings, and a Japanese government official projected a spring operational launch of the mechanism or, at the latest, by the end of the year. On Jan. 22, high-level discussions on maritime issues took place in Yokohama.

On Jan. 16, Nakatani visited the Maritime Self-Defense Force Yokosuka Regional Headquarters. Addressing the sailors, he made it clear that "Japan is at a major turning point. Each citizen

needs to seriously think about how to protect Japan's territorial land, water, and airspace." China, he noted, "has repeatedly committed reckless acts that could develop into an unpredictable situation. We have to firmly protect what needs to be protected."

At the end of January, US Vice Adm. Robert Thomas, commander of the Seventh Fleet, addressing developments in the South China Sea, observed that "it makes sense for the Maritime Self Defense Force to operate in the South China Sea in the future. During a Feb. 3, press conference, Defense Minister Nakatani told reporters that "on account of the growing impact of the situation in the South China Sea on Japan's security, Japan's response needs to be addressed." In response, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson noted that "the situation in the South China Sea is stable.... Countries outside the region should respect the endeavor of countries in the region to safeguard peace and stability, and refrain from sowing discord among other countries and creating tensions."

On March 5, during the National People's Congress, China released the 2015 defense budget, an increase of 10.1 percent over 2014 and fifth consecutive year of double-digit growth. In his work report to Congress, Premier Li Keqiang emphasized the importance of protecting China's boundaries, sea and air space, and of strengthening China's air and naval forces. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga noted the continuing lack of transparency in China's defense spending and military strength. On March 24, PM Abe met with the LDP's foreign policy management team at the Kantei. Afterward, the LDP's Harada Noriaki told reporters that Abe, addressing China's continuing military expansion, said that Japan must act firmly to take the necessary steps with regard to the defense budget to put Japan in a second to none position.

Asked to comment, China's spokesperson said "moves taken by Japan in the fields of military and security are always something in the mind of its Asian neighbors." Noting that Japan's defense spending per capita is "about five times that of China," she wondered "why Japan is making an issue of China's normal defense efforts, and whether there is some other agenda."

On April 27 in New York City, the US and Japan Security Consultative Committee released the New Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation. The Joint Statement accompanying the release "reaffirmed that the Senkaku Islands are territories under the administration of Japan and therefore fall within the scope of the commitments under Article 5 of the Japan-US Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, and that they oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of these islands." In a joint press conference with Prime Minister Abe, President Obama said that "we don't think that a strong US-Japan alliance should be seen as provocative" by China. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson commented that "the US and Japan shoulder the responsibility of ensuring that a third party's interests will not be damaged and peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific will not be undermined by their alliance. We will keep an eye on the future security cooperation between the US and Japan."

## **Business and economics**

Economic news presented a mixed picture in early 2015. On Jan. 15, China's Ministry of Commerce released figures showing that Japanese direct investment in China in 2014 fell 38.8 percent over the previous year to \$4.33 billion, marking the second consecutive year of decline.

Reasons cited for the decline included strains in Japan-China relations and increasing labor costs in China. At the same time, trade volume stabilized after declines of 8 percent in 2012 and 2013. China's imports from Japan grew at a 0.4 percent rate, while China's exports to Japan fell 0.5 percent. Chinese officials attributed the decline to rapid yen depreciation. Meanwhile, Japanese manufacturers, Panasonic, TDK, and Daikin Industries announced relocation of production facilities back to Japan from China, citing yen depreciation and rising labor costs in China as the primary reasons. A positive note was the growth in Chinese tourists to Japan, amounting to 2.22 million in the period January-November 2014, an increase of 1.8 percent despite political tensions over issues related to the Senkakus/Diaoyus and history. To encourage the positive trend, Japan further loosened visa requirement for visitors from China.

China's decision to set a March 31 deadline for countries to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) presented the Abe government with a difficult decision. On March 20, Abe told the Upper House Budget Committee that Japan's involvement in the bank "needs to be carefully considered." That same day, Finance Minister Aso Taro, following a Cabinet meeting, told reporters that Japan could consider joining if issues related to debt sustainability, the environment, and society were worked out but that China had not responded to Japan on such matters. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga said that Japan would take a cautious attitude toward participation in the bank and, unless issues raised by the finance minister were resolved "participation would not be impossible."

At the same time, Japan's Ambassador to China, Kitera Masato told the *Financial Times* that Japan's "business community woke up late, but now they have mounted a big campaign for the AIIB which appears to be very effective." On March 31, the chairman of the Keizai Doyukai, Hasegawa Yasuchika, referring to European decisions to join the bank as founding members, thought the government's position was an "overreaction." He called on the government to assure that Japan's companies would not be disadvantaged in bidding on infrastructure projects by a decision not to join. Also on March 31, PM Abe met with Eto Seishiro, chairman of the LDP's panel for Regional and Diplomatic Partnership and other party officials. Abe asked the group to consider the advantages and disadvantages associated with Japan's joining the AIIB in advance of June deadline. Later, on April 8, the LDP set up a working group to consider an AIIB decision, with an end of May date for submission of recommendations. Speaking at the Upper House Foreign and Defense Committee, Foreign Minister Kishida told the members that "There are points such as ... fair governance ... that we should confirm"; and a decision would follow only "after confirming the specifics if we are to use a huge amount to tax money."

## **Chronology of Japan – China Relations** **January – April 2015**

**Jan. 1, 2015:** Emperor Akihito New Year's Thoughts calls for a study of history of the war going back to the Manchurian Incident.

**Jan. 5, 2015:** Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in his first press conference of 2015 says his government will uphold statements of previous governments in their entirety with regard to history issues.

**Jan. 12, 2015:** Japan Coast Guard proposes construction of three new ships to deal with Chinese coral poaching.

**Jan. 12, 2015:** Japanese and Chinese defense and coast guard officials meet in Tokyo to discuss issues related to a maritime crisis management mechanism.

**Jan. 15, 2015:** China's Ministry of Commerce indicates a 38.4 percent drop in Japanese direct investment in China for 2014.

**Jan. 16, 2015:** Yokohama prosecutors bring proceedings against captain of Chinese vessel arrested for coral poaching on Dec. 21, 2014.

**Jan. 22, 2015:** Japanese and Chinese officials discuss maritime issues in Yokohama.

**Feb. 12, 2015:** Chinese Embassy in Tokyo hosts New Year celebration; Ambassador Cheng Yonghua expresses hope that Abe government will sincerely reflect on history.

**Feb. 13, 2015:** China-Japan Friendship Hospital in Beijing shortens website name to China-Japan Hospital; hospital authorities say the change is unrelated to state of relations.

**Feb. 19, 2015:** Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide announces creation of advisory panel to draft a statement to be issued by PM Abe commemorating 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war.

**Feb. 23, 2015:** China's Foreign Minister Wang chairs UN Security Council; opens debate on Maintaining International Peace and Security by calling attention to 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war; refers to continuing existence of history deniers.

**Feb. 23, 2015:** Liberal Democratic Party's Harada Yoshitake introduces a 1969 Chinese State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping that identifies Senkaku Islands in Japanese characters.

**March 3, 2015:** PM Abe tells Upper House Budget Committee that he is not a denier of history.

**March 5, 2015:** China announces 10.1 percent increase in the defense budget.

**March 13, 2015:** Abe government announces new overseas development assistance policy adding "national interest" as criteria for considering projects; non-military aid to foreign militaries will be considered on case by case basis.

**March 13, 2015:** Japan's National Institute for Defense Studies publishes its *2014 China National Security Report*.

**March 15, 2015:** Prime Minister Li Keqiang calls on Japan to bear responsibility for wartime acts of aggression.

**March 19, 2015:** LDP's Foreign Policy section adopts resolution calling on government to use every means possible to stop Chinese incursions into the Senkaku Islands.

**March 19, 2015:** Senior Japanese and Chinese Foreign Ministry and Defense officials meet in Tokyo for the first time in four years.

**March 19, 2015:** LDP Secretary General Tanigaki and Komeito Secretary General Inoue meet PM Abe to brief on their upcoming visit to China.

**March 21, 2015:** Chinese, Korean, and Japanese foreign ministers meet in Seoul, their first meeting in three years; Chinese and Japanese foreign ministers hold separate bilateral meeting.

**March 22, 2015:** Yonaguni local election supports deployment of Ground Self-Defense Force to the island by vote of 632 to 445.

**March 23-24, 2015:** LDP Secretary General Tanigaki and Komeito Secretary General Inoue visit China and meet Yu Zhengsheng, fourth ranking CCP official, Wang Jiaru, head of CCP International Department, and Tang Jiaxuan, head of China-Japan Friendship Committee.

**April 4, 2015:** PM Abe sends greetings to celebration of Japan-China Traditional Cultural Arts in Beijing; hails the event as ushering in a new era in Japan-China friendship.

**April 7, 2015:** Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga expresses thanks to PLA Navy for helping Japanese citizen evacuate from Yemen On April 6.

**April 8-11, 2015:** Delegation from China's National People's Congress visits Tokyo to meet Japanese counterparts.

**April 14, 2015:** Premier Li Keqiang meets former Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei, the first meeting by Li with a Japanese political figure since nationalization of the Senkaku Islands.

**April 21, 2015:** PM Abe makes offering at Yasukuni Shrine during the spring festival.

**April 22, 2015:** PM Abe addresses Asia-Africa Summit in Bandung, Indonesia expresses remorse over the war but no apology.

**April 22, 2015:** President Xi and PM Abe meet during Asia-Africa Summit.

**April 23, 2015:** Three ministers in the Abe Cabinet visit Yasukuni Shrine.

**April 28, 2015:** Japan-China Science and Technology Commission meets in Beijing.