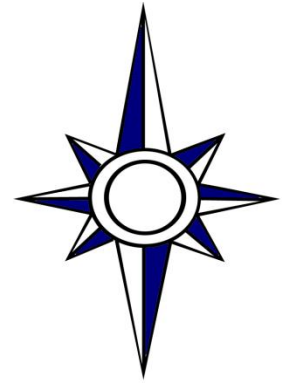


Comparative Connections

A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations



Japan-China Relations: Troubled Waters: Part II

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Reactions to the Sept. 7 Senkaku fishing boat incident continued to buffet the relationship. Both the East China Sea and the Senkaku Islands remain flashpoints in both countries. Anti-Japanese protests spread through China in mid-October and were followed by smaller-scale anti-Chinese protests in Japan. Efforts by diplomats to restart the mutually beneficial strategic relationship ran into strong political headwinds, which hit gale force with the public uploading of the Japan Coast Guard's video of the September collisions on *YouTube*. Prime Minister Kan did meet China's political leadership, but the Kan-Wen and the Kan-Hu meetings were hotel lobby or corridor meet-and-greets, with the Chinese taking care to emphasize their informal nature. In Japan, public opinion on relations with China went from bad in October to worse in December.

Public opinion

On Sept. 20, in the wake of the Senkaku fishing boat incident, the *Sankei Shimbun* and the *Fuji News Network* conducted a spot public opinion survey. Of the respondents, 79.7 percent answered that their image of China had worsened, while 71.5 percent found China to be a threat to Japan's national security. Only 7 percent found China to be trustworthy; in stark contrast, 85.1 percent said that China was not trustworthy. Meanwhile, 86.8 percent recognized that China was important for Japan's economic well-being. Support for the Kan government fell from 64.2 percent in a previous mid-September survey to 48.5 percent, with 78.8 percent of respondents citing concerns with the government's handling of the fishing boat incident.

A *Yomiuri Shimbun* telephone survey conducted Oct. 1-3 tracked closely with the *Sankei-Fuji* poll. In the *Yomiuri* survey, 84 percent of respondents said that they did not trust China, surpassing the previous high of 77 percent in a 2008 survey. At the same time, 72 percent said that the government's release of the fishing boat captain was not appropriate, citing the appearance that Japan would cave into pressure as the reason, and 94 percent found China's demand for an apology and compensation "unconvincing." Looking ahead, 90 percent of the respondents called on the government to assert more forcefully its position on the Senkakus and 71 percent called on the government to strengthen the alliance with the United States.

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

The downward trend continued in October. A *Fuji-Sankei* poll, released on Nov. 2, found 86.6 percent of respondents saying they could not trust China, up 3.5 percent from September; only 6.4 percent could trust China. And, in a joint *Yomiuri-China News Agency* telephone poll, released on Nov. 8, 90 percent of Japanese respondents said that bilateral relations are in bad shape and 87 percent said they could not trust China. In China, 81 percent of respondents said relations were in bad shape, and 79 percent said they could not trust Japan.

Japanese Coast Guard video

Politics continued to affect the relationship. At a Sept. 30 meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee, attended by Prime Minister Kan Naoto and the Cabinet, the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP's) Onodera Itsunori, a former senior vice minister of foreign affairs, indicated the government's handling of the September incident was "the greatest diplomatic debacle since the end of World War II." Kan apologized for unsettling the Japanese public and went on to criticize Beijing for its handling of the issue. The prime minister said he would not "budge an inch" over his responsibility to protect Japanese sovereignty over the Senkakus, observing that "both circumstantial evidence and Chinese maps clearly indicate that the Senkaku Islands are part of Japan's territory." At the conclusion of the meeting, both ruling and opposition parties asked the government to submit the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) video of the Sept. 7 incident to the Diet.

Responding to Kan's remarks, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu told reporters that "The Diaoyu Island and its adjacent islands have been China's inherent territory since ancient times." Ma went on to indict Japan for its "illegal detention of the Chinese fishing boat and crew and for "obstinately applying so-called domestic judicial procedures," which he labeled "absurd, illegal and invalid."

After the Oct. 1 Diet session, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sengoku Yoshito met at the prime minister's residence with Foreign Minister Maehara Seiji, Justice Minister Yanagida Minoru, and Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Mabuchi Sumio to discuss the Diet's request for the video. The ministers agreed that Sengoku would take the lead in dealing with the Diet, and he later met with senior Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leaders. Concerned with the impact the release of the video might have on relations with China as well as with the wellbeing of the remaining Fujita employee still held by China, the political leaders decided to delay the release and to further study options, including a possible release of the video to a small number of Diet members. On Oct. 7, the government and ruling parties decided to postpone release of the video. China released the last of the four Fujita employees on Oct. 9.

On Oct. 13, the Lower House Budget Committee voted unanimously to request the Naha Special Prosecutors Office to turn over the video to the Diet. Five days later, the DPJ and government decided to submit the video. Within the Diet, pressure began to build to release the video for public viewing. Foreign Minister Maehara told the media that the video "clearly shows that it was the Chinese fishing boat that slammed itself into the JCG patrol boats." Ishihara Nobuteru, of the opposition LDP, called for full disclosure to the public following submission to the Diet, arguing that "it is important for the people to know the facts." DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Hachiro Yoshio opposed public release, taking into account the "diplomatic situation." He argued that access should be limited to the directors of the Lower House Budget Committee.

The government released an edited six-minute version of the JCG video to the Lower House Budget Committee on Oct. 27. In a letter of transmittal, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sengoku asked legislators to be aware that “it needs to be carefully handled in light of the effect it has on the international political environment.” DPJ Diet Affairs Chairman Hachiro told reporters that the Budget Affairs Committee would decide how the video would be handled and to whom it would be shown. Meanwhile, the LDP expressed dissatisfaction with the submission of the six-minute DVD, requested the entire footage, and pressed for its release to the public. Later, Sengoku said that submission of the video to the Diet would “have little effect” on relations with China, but that if the video were to be made public, the government was concerned that it would likely invite a reaction in both countries and affect the prime minister’s “conduct of diplomacy.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu told reporters that release of the video represented an effort by Japan “to lay the blame on China,” which he said is “impossible” as the video was “unable to alter reality or obfuscate Japan’s illegal actions.”

On Nov. 1, 30 members of the Lower House Budget Committee viewed the six-minute version of the video. Afterward, Budget Committee Chairman Nakai Hiroshi told reporters “I could clearly see the fishing boat crashing into the JCG ships.” Meanwhile, the LDP, led by Policy Research Committee Chairman Ishiba Shigeu, pressed for a public release of the video.

In Beijing Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma told reporters that the JCG ships “disturbed, drove away, intercepted, surrounded, and held the Chinese fishing boat, which is illegal in itself and severely infringes on China’s territorial sovereignty and the just rights and interests of the Chinese fishermen.”

Video hits *YouTube*

On Nov. 4, the JCG video showing the collisions between the Chinese trawler and the JCG ships appeared on *YouTube*. Beijing’s response came the following day when Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei said the video “cannot change the truth. It cannot cover up the illegality of Japan’s actions.” Earlier Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai observed that “If the Japanese side is really serious and sincere about overcoming the current difficulties ... and building a strategic relationship of mutual benefit, then it should do everything in its power to move in that direction...” Cui added that he hoped that Japan would “make the right choice.”

In Tokyo, Foreign Minister Maehara told a press conference that China had expressed its “concern” over the leak but had not protested through diplomatic channels. Prime Minister Kan expressed the government’s concern over the handling of the video and ordered a thorough investigation of the leak. Kan later confirmed that the *YouTube* video was identical to the one taken by the JCG.

On Nov. 11, sources close to the investigation revealed that a 43-year-old JCG officer, the chief navigator of the JCG ship *Uranami*, had admitted uploading the video on *YouTube* from a USB device. The officer reportedly told police that “people have the right to see the video.” Prosecutors and legal authorities decided not to arrest the officer, pending further investigation and because the classification level of the video was not considered to be “confidential.” In mid-

December, police referred the case to the Tokyo District Prosecutor's Office for a decision on indictment, which the *Kyodo News Service* reported as being "highly unlikely." Meanwhile, the JCG continued to consider disciplinary action.

Senkaku Islands

As the fishing boat incident played out in early October, Beijing sent two fisheries patrol boats to the waters near the Senkakus. Following the Oct. 4 Kan-Wen meeting at the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Brussels, the two Chinese patrol ships were withdrawn on Oct. 6. Meanwhile, on Oct. 4, mayors from Okinawa prefecture met Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Furukawa Motohisa at the prime minister residence in Tokyo and requested the government "to take proper measures to protect the nation's territorial land and waters" and increase the JCG surveillance activity in the area.

On Oct. 14, Chinese media reported that three fisheries patrol boats had been dispatched to the region. A senior Chinese Ministry of Agriculture official was quoted as saying that the deployment was for "safeguarding national sovereignty and protecting fishermen's legal interests." Both Prime Minister Kan and Chief Cabinet Secretary Sengoku told reporters that JCG ships operating in the area had not reported sighting of the Chinese patrol ships.

In mid-October, the *Sankei Shimbun* reported that Chinese sources had sounded out Tokyo about shelving the Senkaku sovereignty issues, leaving the issue for future generations to decide. In doing so, Beijing appeared to be reverting to a proposal made by Deng Xiaoping at the time of the signing of 1978 the Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty. On Oct. 21, during a meeting of the Lower House Security Committee, Foreign Minister Maehara made clear that "no such agreement exists." Deng's proposal was "unilateral" and never accepted by Japan. To have agreed to shelve the issue would be to admit the existence of a territorial issue, where none exists. Japan would turn down any similar Chinese proposal. In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma told reporters that Japan's denial of its acceptance of Deng's proposal represented a "denial of historical reality."

On Oct. 24, JCG ships confirmed the presence of two Chinese fisheries patrol boats operating in the East China Sea in an area between Japan's territorial waters and the its economic exclusive zone (EEZ). The Chinese ships left the area after being warned and, on Oct. 25, Sengoku told reporters that Japan had protested the incident through diplomatic channels.

In early November, former Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan traveled to Tokyo to attend meeting of the Japan-China Friendship Committee for the 21st Century. While in Tokyo, Tang met Prime Minister Kan, DPJ Secretary General Okada Katsuya, LDP Secretary General Tanigaki Sadakazu, and Keidanren Chairman Yonekura Hiromasa. Tang again advanced the idea that "in normalizing Japan-China relations, the issue in dispute (sovereignty over the Senkakus) was shelved" and "over the last four decades, there was a tacit understanding between the two countries."

The following day, the supra-party union of Diet members "To Protect National Sovereignty and the National Interest" announced it would seek to change the existing arrangement whereby

Tokyo administers the Senkaku Islands through a lease from private landowners by introducing legislation to transfer ownership to the national government, which would also allow the stationing of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) on the islands.

On Nov. 9, the JCG found two Chinese research ships operating within Japan's EEZ and ordered them to leave the area. The JCG confirmed that the Chinese ships had complied. In late November two advanced Chinese fisheries surveillance ships, the *Yuzheng 301* and the *Yuzheng 201*, were twice spotted near the Senkakus, but outside Japan's territorial waters. The first sighting was on Nov. 20-21, the second was on Nov. 28. In a mid-December, a senior official of China's Fisheries Administration told the *Asahi Shimbun* that China will increase deployments of large-scale fisheries patrol ships near the Senkakus and is planning to build five patrol ships of over 3,000 tons over the next five years.

On the morning of Dec. 2, in contravention of a government prohibition on landing on the Senkaku Islands, two members of the Ishigaki Municipal Assembly, Okinawa prefecture, landed on Minami Kojima. Earlier on Oct. 20, the Ishigaki Assembly had adopted a resolution calling on the mayor and assemblymen to visit the islands and asking for Tokyo's permission. The two assemblymen explained that, having waited over a month for a reply from the government, they thought Tokyo was taking too much time or was simply indifferent. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu labeled the landing as "an act of intrusion into China's national territory and violation of its sovereignty." On Dec. 17, the Ishigaki Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution designating Jan. 14 as Senkaku Day in commemoration of the anniversary of Japan's assertion of sovereignty over the Senkakus in 1895.

In early December, a Guangzhou weekly magazine named the captain of the fishing boat at the time of the September incident as one the top 100 most influential men in China. Later, Hong Kong media reported that newspapers that ran articles based on the weekly's original "Top 100" story were withdrawn from circulation on Dec. 13 and their staffs disciplined.

East China Sea

On Oct. 1, following media reports of Chinese activity at the Shirakaba (Chunxiao) gas field, Japanese Ambassador Niwa Uichiro met China's Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs Hu Zhengyue and asked China to refrain from taking unilateral actions at the site. Niwa explained that if Chinese activities were found to violate the Japan-China agreement on joint development, Japan would take "appropriate measures." He also urged Beijing to withdraw Chinese fishing patrol ships operating near the Senkakus.

The Oct. 21 *Sankei Shimbun* reported that China, in accordance with the 2001 agreement on advance notification of research activities, had notified Tokyo of its plan to conduct maritime research activities near the gas field in the East China Sea. The *Sankei* report noted that the area designated for research activity crossed the mid-line maritime boundary recognized by Japan.

Foreign Ministers Maehara and Yang met on Nov. 14 during the APEC Forum in Yokohama. Maehara urged China to commit to an early resumption of negotiations on joint development of the East China Sea gas fields. Yang, however, emphasized the need to prepare "the appropriate

conditions and atmosphere.” When Maehara also pressed for an explanation for the arrest of the four Fujita employees, Yang replied that the employees had “clearly intruded into a restricted military zone.” The two ministers did agree to increase private exchanges in order to improve national sentiments. There was no discussion of the fishing boat incident, however; Yang did say he wanted to handle “sensitive issues appropriately.”

Diplomacy: looking for traction

As the quarter began, the Kan government worked to deal with the fallout of the fishing boat incident. On Oct. 1 Foreign Minister Maehara, in a speech delivered in Tokyo, said that it is necessary for Japan and China to take strong steps to avoid such incidents in the future. On Japan’s part, Maehara made it clear that the door “is always open” and that “the window for dialogue with China is not closed.” Taking a broad perspective, he emphasized that Japan is looking to build a relationship that becomes a mutual plus.

On Oct. 4, Prime Minister Kan and Premier Wen held a 25-minute corridor conference on the sidelines of the ASEM in Brussels. After restating their respective positions on the Senkakus, the two leaders agreed to continue efforts to promote a mutually beneficial strategic relationship. Kan told reporters that the two also agreed that it was “not desirable” for relations to deteriorate and that governmental and private exchanges between the two countries should be resumed. The following day, Foreign Minister Maehara told the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan that “while there is no territorial dispute in the East China Sea, I think it is necessary for Japan and China to agree to pool their wisdom to prevent a recurrence [of an incident] and to work for the reestablishment of a mutually beneficial strategic relationship...”

During the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus 8 (ADMM+) in Hanoi, Defense Minister Kitazawa Yoshimi on Oct. 11 “informally” met his Chinese counterpart Liang Guanglie in a hotel lobby, at the request of the Chinese. The two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to building mutually beneficial strategic relations and agreed to take steps toward establishing a bilateral communications mechanism to deal with potential conflicts at sea. Liang also informed Kitazawa of Beijing’s decision to postpone the Qindao port call of a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) training ship scheduled for Oct. 15, citing concern for the sensitivities of the Chinese people.

Efforts to restart the mutually beneficial strategic relationship were interrupted by anti-Japanese protests in China. On Oct. 19, Maehara, in remarks to the Upper House characterized China’s response to the Senkaku incident as “extremely hysterical.” DPJ Secretary General Okada told the *Japan Times* that “it is important for both sides to be careful not to turn to extreme nationalism.” The next day, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu replied that China was shocked by Foreign Minister Maehara’s use of the word “hysterical” and went on to say that “it is understandable that some Chinese people want to express their indignation toward some erroneous remarks and deeds by Japan recently.” Ma also called for self-restraint in the exercise of Chinese patriotism and for protests to be carried out in a “legal and rational manner.” On Oct. 21, China’s Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Hu Zhengyue told a press conference that Maehara’s remarks appeared to undercut the Kan-Wen agreement reached in Brussels to advance the mutually beneficial strategic relationship and urged the foreign minister to deeply reflect on

his choice of words. Hu found Maehara's "strong language" and "almost daily attacks" on China as "inappropriate for a foreign minister." Looking ahead, he observed that it is essential to create a proper atmosphere for a possible summit in Hanoi. He also questioned why Maehara had taken the position that the "ball is now in China's court." He went on to say efforts by both countries are essential and that statements such as Maehara's only serve to "wound, weaken, and disrupt" the relationship and "cannot be tolerated."

Meanwhile, Eda Satuski, DPJ member and former Upper House president, met with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. Eda used the meeting to promote a Japan-China meeting at the upcoming East Asia Summit (EAS) in Hanoi. Afterward, Eda told reporters that Yang had said that "the event is very important because it will serve as the start of Japan-China relations" and that "we want to make it a success." Also, according to Eda, Yang criticized the anti-Japanese demonstrations, observing that "using violent methods to achieve a solution is absolutely not acceptable." Yang added that the "Chinese people's spirit of love for their country is understandable."

On Oct. 22, Foreign Minister Maehara said that it was time for China and Japan to look to the future and take steps to put the fishing boat incident behind them and that he wanted "to work to improve relations between the two countries." Commenting on Maehara's remarks, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma said "We have taken note of the statement. We expect Japan to work together with us to maintain and advance the strategic bilateral relationship of mutual trust."

Against a background of and rising nationalist sentiments in both countries, diplomats in Beijing and Tokyo worked to advance high-level meetings even as they endeavored not to be seen as too forward-leaning in their re-engagement. On Oct. 29, Maehara and Yang met on the sidelines of EAS in Hanoi for the first time since the Senkaku incident. Originally scheduled for thirty minutes, the meeting continued for close to 80 minutes. Both ministers reiterated their respective talking points on the Senkakus and on joint development in the East China Sea. Maehara pressed for an early resumption of negotiations and Yang stressed the need to prepare a proper environment. In the end, both reaffirmed commitments to advance the mutually beneficial strategic relationship.

Arranging a meeting between Kan and Wen proved to be more difficult. Initially Beijing rejected Japanese overtures with Assistant Foreign Minister Hu telling *Xinhua* that "Japan had ruined the atmosphere" by making the contested islands a "hot topic" in the media and in conversations with other delegations at the Hanoi meeting and by making "untrue statements" about the contents of the Maehara-Yang meeting.

Denied a formal meeting, Kan and Wen met "spontaneously" on Oct. 30 before the start of the EAS for a 10-minute "informal" conversation. According to Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuyama, the two leaders expressed regret over the failure to meet earlier, agreed to promote the mutually beneficial strategic relationship, and to expand private exchanges. Later Kan told reporters that he hoped to meet President Hu during the November APEC meeting in Yokohama.

Despite Japanese efforts, the Kan-Hu meeting on Nov. 13 was a last-minute development, formally agreed to 30 minutes before it began. The two leaders committed to develop the

mutually beneficial strategic relationship, to promote both governmental and private exchanges, and to promote economic cooperation on global issues. On the Senkakus, both sides reiterated their official talking points, with Kan expressing Japan's "firm position" on the issue and Hu doing the same for China. Underscoring the political sensitivities surrounding the meeting, Tokyo described the event as a formal meeting, while Beijing cast it as "conversation" at the request of the Japanese prime minister.

In mid-December, Yamaguchi Natsuo of the New Komeito Party traveled to Beijing and met Wang Jiarui of the CCP's International Department. His visit was the first by a Japanese political leader since the September fishing boat incident. Addressing the incident, Wang told Yamaguchi that China had "worked on Japan through various channels but Japan didn't listen" and, as a result, the national sentiments of the two countries had been damaged." Wang took the position that it was incumbent on political leadership to view relations from a long-term perspective. Yamaguchi agreed that outstanding issues "must be settled over the long term."

On Dec. 15, Yamaguchi met Vice President Xi Jinping in the Great Hall of the People. In his remarks, Xi said that "the common interests of the two countries are far greater than the differences of views of the two sides." He said that China regarded Japan as "a partner, not a rival" and emphasized that China "is not seeking hegemony." Both Xi and Yamaguchi acknowledged that the Senkaku incident had damaged "the national sentiments of both countries." Nevertheless, Xi observed that relations were "improving." However, Xi did not respond to Yamaguchi's call for cooperation in dealing with North Korea

In a final effort to gain diplomatic traction before the end of the year, Japanese government sources revealed that preparations were being made for a Japan-China security dialogue in Beijing on Dec. 24. On Dec. 21, the meeting was postponed until next year, with scheduling difficulties cited as the reason. At the same time, a delegation of mid-level and junior members of the supra-partisan Japan-China Friendship Parliamentarians League, led by former Foreign Minister Komura Masahiko, visited China, Dec. 22-27.

Security

On Oct. 1, in response to questions during a meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee, Defense Minister Kitazawa said the government would consider deployments of Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) to Yonaguni Island and Japan's southwest islands in the review of the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG). Later in the month, the *Asahi Shimbun* reported that the Ministry of Defense (MOD) was considering a redeployment of *E-2C* patrol aircraft from Misawa Airbase in Japan's north to Naha in Okinawa prefecture. To avoid increasing tensions with China, the redeployments would be periodic, not permanent. In early November, the *Yomiuri* reported that the MOD had decided to deploy a 200-man GSDF coastal monitoring unit to the southwest islands.

On Oct. 7, Diet members, led by former DPJ Parliamentary Minister of Defense Nagashima Akihisa, and including former LDP Defense Agency Director General Nakatani Gen and Sato Shigeki from the Komeito Party, established the supra-party "Group of Young Diet Members to Establish National Security for the New Century."

In mid-October, Marine Self-Defense Force (MSDF) officials said that the MOD would increase Japan's submarine fleet from the present 16 to 20/22 in the 2011-15 defense program. Speaking off the record, MOD officials said the increase was aimed at reinforcing Japan's posture in the East China Sea. The increase in the submarine fleet is the first since the 1976 NDPG established a 16-submarine force structure.

On Nov. 18, the DPJ's Foreign Policy and Security Affairs Council, chaired by Nakagawa Masaharu, adopted a draft report of policy proposals to revise the NDPG. The report called for a strengthening of the SDF's surveillance and warning capabilities as well as the development of "dynamic deterrence" capabilities that would increase mobility to deal with emergencies. In particular, the report called for an increase in GSDF deployments in Kyushu and Okinawa to enhance the defense posture in the southwestern Nansei Islands, and for a review of Japan's ban on arms exports. The DPJ document tracked closely with the July report of Council on Security and Defense Capabilities for the New Era.

The government adopted the new NDPG on Dec 17. In contrast to the previous guidelines, which cautioned Japan to "remain attentive" to China's actions, the 2010 document cast China's military buildup and increasing maritime activities as "matters of regional and international concern." Earlier in a Dec. 8 interview with *Asahi Shimbun*, Ambassador Cheng cautioned that acting "on the assumption that China is the hypothetical adversary runs counter to the spirit of mutual trust and is a dangerous notion." China, the ambassador explained, "does not seek hegemony" as its military activities "are absolutely not hostile acts against Japan and are for training purposes" and "should not be criticized."

Beijing greeted the adoption of the new NDPG by reasserting that China holds strictly to the path of peaceful development and that its defense policies are strictly defensive in nature and do not pose a threat to any country. The Foreign Ministry statement went on to add that "some countries take it upon themselves to represent international society and without cause irresponsibly complain about China's development."

Rare earth metals

The cutoff of China's rare earth metal exports to Japan in late September, though officially denied by Beijing, was widely reported in Japanese business circles. On Oct. 18 during an Upper House Budget Committee meeting, Foreign Minister Maehara told Diet members that "The Chinese Ministry of Commerce says that it is not taking such a measure. However, it can hardly be said that the situation has returned to normal." The *Asahi Shimbun* reported that, as of mid-October, of the 30 Japanese companies dealing in rare earth metals from China, only two had been able to import the metals since Sept. 21, when a suspension of customs clearance procedures had been confirmed.

On Oct. 19, *China Daily* reported that that rare metal exports in 2011 would be reduced up to 30 percent, marking the second consecutive year rare metal exports have been cut back. According to Ministry of Commerce figures, China exported 24,280 tons in 2010, down from 31,310 tons in 2009. Five days later, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Ohata Akihiro met China's Vice Minister of Commerce Jiang Yaoping in Tokyo and asked China to ease

restrictions on rare metal exports. Jiang denied the existence of restrictions but explained that China is “strengthening inspections ... with the aim of preventing smuggling.” As for reduced export quotas for 2011, Jiang said that they were put in place to conserve resources out of concern that they could “run out in 10 or 15 years if they are used at the current pace.” The Oct. 28 *New York Times* reported that China had resumed rare earth exports to the US, Europe, and Japan.

On the sidelines of the APEC meeting in Yokohama, Minister Ohata met with Zhang Ping chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission. Zhang sought to reassure Ohata on rare earth exports, explaining that, before leaving China, he had ordered that customs clearance procedures be expedited. Zhang reiterated Vice Minister Jiang’s points that strengthened inspections and customs clearance procedures were meant to conserve China’s natural resources. Shortly thereafter, Japanese trading companies reported that customs clearance procedures were being expedited and that rare earth exports would resume in the near future. On Nov. 18, Ohata told reporters that “we have received notifications from Chinese firms ... that there has been some improvement in customs clearance procedures and that shipments will resume shortly.”

At the end of the quarter...

On Dec. 18, the Cabinet Office released results of its public opinion poll on Japan’s’ foreign relations. Questionnaires were sent to 3,000 adults; the survey had a 65 percent response rate. Of the respondents, 88.6 percent did not perceive relations with China to be good, an increase of 33.4 percent over 2009 and the highest percentage since 1986; 77.8 percent did not feel affinity toward China, an increase of 19.3 percent and the highest since 1978 when the survey was first conducted. Only 18.5 percent held affinity toward China, a decrease of 20 percent; and only 8.3 percent thought relations with China to be good, a drop of 30.2 percent. A *Yomiuri-Gallup* poll released Dec. 22 confirmed the Cabinet Office findings. Only 8 percent of respondents trusted China, while those who did not trust China “very much” stood at 47 percent and “not at all” represented 40 percent.

Chronology of Japan-China Relations October – December 2010

Sept. 30, 2010: Prime Minister Kan Naoto apologies for the poor handling of the Senkaku incident and reaffirms Japanese sovereignty over the islands.

Oct. 1, 2010: Foreign Minister Maehara Sieji calls for dialogue with China in order to avoid future incidents similar to the one in the Senkakus.

Oct. 1, 2010: Chief Cabinet Secretary Sengoku Yoshito assumes the lead in dealing with the Diet’s request for the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) video of the Senkaku incident.

Oct. 1, 2010: Minister of Defense Kitazawa Toshimi tells the Lower House Budget Committee that the government would consider deployments of the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) to Yonagumi Island in Japan's southwest island chain.

Oct. 1, 2010: Japan's Ambassador to China Niwa Uichiro meets Assistant Foreign Minister Hu Zhengyue and asks China to stop unilateral actions related to the Shirakaba/Chunxiao natural gas field in East China Sea.

Oct. 4, 2010: Prime Minister Kan and Premier Wen meet at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) meeting in Brussels.

Oct. 4, 2010: Mayors from Okinawa Prefecture meet Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Furukawa Motohisa and request that the government increase surveillance activities in the area and protect Japanese sovereignty over territorial land and water.

Oct. 6, 2010: Two Chinese fisheries patrol ships depart waters near the Senkakus.

Oct. 7, 2010: Supra-party "Group of Young Diet members to Establish National Security in the 21st Century" is formed in Japan.

Oct. 9, 2010: China releases last of four Fujita employees who had been detained on suspicion of entering a restricted military zone.

Oct. 11, 2010: Defense Ministers Kitazawa and Liang Guanglie meet in Hanoi at the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus 8 (ADMM+) and reaffirm the commitment to building mutually beneficial strategic relationship and to take steps to establish bilateral communications mechanism to avoid conflicts at sea. Liang also informs Kitazawa of China's decision to cancel the scheduled Oct. 15 Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) port call in Qingdao.

Oct. 13, 2010: Lower House Budget Committee unanimously requests Naha Special Prosecutors Office to submit the JCG video of the Senkaku incident to the Diet.

Oct. 16-18, 2010: Anti-Japanese, Senkakus-related protests take place in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Xian and Zhengzhou.

Oct. 18, 2010: Japanese government and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) comply with Budget Committee's request to turn over the JCG video of the Senkaku incident.

Oct. 18, 2010: Prime Minister Kan tells the Upper House that Japan has urged China to protect Japanese citizens and businesses in the face of anti-Japanese protests; Ambassador Niwa calls on Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi with the same request.

Oct. 19, 2010: *China Daily* says China's rare earth metal exports will be cut 30 percent in 2011.

Oct. 19, 2010: Foreign Minister Maehara decries China's "hysterical" response to the Senkaku incident; China expresses shock at Maehara's language.

Oct. 20, 2010: Ishigaki Municipal Assembly asks national government permission to land on Senkaku Islands.

Oct. 21, 2010: Foreign Minister Maehara rejects Chinese claims that Japan and China had agreed to shelve sovereignty issues over the Senkakus during negotiations over the 1978 Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty; China charges Japan with denying historical reality.

Oct. 21, 2010: Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs Hu Zhengyue blasts Maehara's language and repeated attacks on China as inappropriate for a foreign minister.

Oct. 23-25, 2010: Anti-Japanese, Senkaku-related protests resume in China.

Oct. 24, 2010: JCG confirms Chinese fisheries patrol ships are operating between Japan's territorial waters and Economic Exclusive Zone; Japan protests through diplomatic channels.

Oct. 25, 2010: Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) Minister Ohata Akihiro meets Vice Minister of Commerce Jiang Yaping in Tokyo and asks China to ease restrictions on rare metal exports.

Oct. 27, 2010: Japanese government releases six-minute, edited copy of JCG video of the Senkaku incident to the Budget Committee.

Oct. 29, 2010: Foreign Ministers Maehara and Yang meet on sidelines of East Asian Summit (EAS) in Hanoi; they reiterate talking points on Senkakus and reaffirm commitment to mutually beneficial strategic relationship.

Oct. 30, 2010: Prime Minister Kan and Premier Wen meet at the EAS in Hanoi.

Nov. 2-4, 2010: Former Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan attends a Tokyo meeting of the Japan-China Friendship Committee for the 21st Century; meets Prime Minister Kan, DPJ and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretaries General Okada Katusya and Tanigaki Sadakazu and Keidanren Chairman Yonekura Hiromasa.

Nov. 4, 2010: The JCG video of the Senkaku incident is uploaded to *YouTube*; Prime Minister Kan orders an investigation of the leak.

Nov. 5, 2010: Supra-party Union of Diet Members to Protect National Sovereignty and the National Interests announces its intention to amend existing legislation to transfer ownership status of Senkakus to the national government.

Nov. 5, 2010: China insists JCG video does not change the truth of Japan's illegal actions.

Nov. 8, 2010: Chinese deploy police to prevent anti-Japanese protests during the Asian Games in Guangzhou.

Nov. 9, 2010: JCG orders Chinese research ships to leave Japan's EEZ; Chinese ships comply.

Nov. 11, 2010: Chief navigator of JCG ship *Uranmai* admits to uploading of video to *YouTube*.

Nov. 13, 2010: Prime Minister Kan and President Hu meet during APEC Forum in Yokohama.

Nov. 14, 2010: Foreign Ministers Maehara and Yang meet during APEC Forum in Yokohama.

Nov. 18, 2010: DPJ Foreign Policy and Security Affairs Council adopts draft proposals for National Defense Program Guidelines.

Nov. 18, 2010: METI Minister Ohata meets Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission Zhang Ping in Yokohama; Zhang tells Ohata that he has ordered expedited customs procedures for rare earth metal exports.

Nov. 20-21, 2010: JCG finds two Chinese fisheries surveillance ships operating near the Senkakus but outside Japan's territorial waters.

Dec. 17, 2010: Ishigaki Assembly unanimously adopts a resolution designating Jan. 14 as Senkakus Day.

Dec. 17, 2010: Kan Cabinet adopts new National Defense Program Guidelines.

Dec. 21, 2010: Japan's Foreign Ministry announces that Japan-China Security Dialogue scheduled for Dec. 24 in Beijing is postponed; scheduling difficulties are given as the reason.

Dec. 22-27, 2010: Supra-party Diet delegation of Japan-China Friendship Parliamentarians League visits China.