

COMPARATIVE

C O N N E C T I O N S

A TRIANNUAL E-JOURNAL
ON EAST ASIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS

JAPAN-CHINA RELATIONS

NO PYROTECHNICS, NO PROGRESS

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Though free of the large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations and acerbic exchanges that have characterized the recent past, the cold peace between China and Japan continued in the early months of 2017. There were no meetings of high-level officials, and none were scheduled. Mutual irritants continued on familiar topics: defense and territorial issues, Taiwan, trade and tourism, and textbooks and history.

This article is extracted from [Comparative Connections](#): A Triannual E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations, Vol. 19, No. 1, May 2017. Preferred citation: June Teufel Dreyer, "Japan-China Relations: No Pyrotechnics, No Progress," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 95-104.

Though free of the large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations and acerbic exchanges that have characterized the recent past, the cold peace between China and Japan continued in the early months of 2017. There were no meetings of high-level officials, and none were scheduled. Mutual irritants continued on familiar topics: defense and territorial issues, Taiwan, trade and tourism, and textbooks and history.

Defense and territorial issues

Each side continued to express apprehension over the other's military preparations. As the year opened, Japanese sources [revealed](#) that Chinese government ships had entered the waters contiguous to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands more than 1,000 times since the Japanese government bought three of the five from private Japanese owners in 2012. Japan continued providing updates with each new incursion, whether maritime or aerial, with China responding that the areas involved were within the PRC's self-delineated exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and air defense identification zone (ADIZ). Chinese ships continued to intrude on a regular basis throughout the reporting period.

ルーヤン II 級ミサイル駆逐艦(150)



Luyang II-class missile destroyer (150) (MOD, 24 April)

One of three PLAN ships seen in Japanese water on 24 April 2017.

A nightmare concern for Japan involves [gray area situations](#) in which a large number of fishing vessels staffed by soldiers in disguise land on the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands despite Coast Guard efforts to stop them, overpower police officers, raise the Chinese flag, and settle in, protected by the Chinese Navy. Under current Japanese law, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) would not be authorized to use force to deal with the situation, since technically the Chinese actions do not constitute an armed attack by a foreign nation. Successive US administrations, and most recently Secretary of Defense James Mattis, have affirmed that the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty includes the islands in its pledge to defend Japan against armed invasion. But this is not armed invasion.



Source: Yomiuri, 1 April 2017.

Japan's Coast Guard is installing [video transmissions](#) on all 12 of its special unit large patrol boats assigned to monitor the area. These will enable real-time transmissions directly to the office of the prime minister and Coast Guard headquarters; satellite circuits will enable concurrent transmission of multiple videos. Completion is expected by the end of fiscal year 2017, i.e., 31 March 2018. While this will improve communication, it will not solve the problem of what action to take.

Demands from US presidential candidate Donald Trump that Japan spend more to provide for its own defense or risk the withdrawal of US troops received an enthusiastic response from conservative Japanese think tanks as well as resistance from the center-left. [Funabashi Yoichi](#), former editor-in-chief of the center-left *Asahi Shimbun* and one of the country's most astute commentators on international affairs, worried that Trump might try to play China against Japan saying that, "to extract concessions from Japan, nothing would work better [for Trump] than the scent of a huge deal with China." It was, he reasoned, imperative that Tokyo and Washington operate under a closely shared understanding of China. In his several meetings with Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, however, Trump did not push the point of increased defense expenditures. In the end, a record ¥ 5.1 trillion budget was allocated, "to counter China's increased maritime assertiveness and North Korea's nuclear and missile threats." Even so, the increase, up 1.4 percent over 2016, amounted to only 0.926 percent of total GDP.

Chinese sources accused Japanese conservatives of seeking to use North Korea's missile launches as a convenient rationalization for acquiring a first-strike capability. Two former defense

ministers, Nakatani Gen and Onodera Itsunori, had separately pointed out the [advantages](#) of being able to neutralize an enemy base before Japan came under attack. *Xinhua*, China's official news agency, reported that the country was on high alert for Japan's military moves, noted that the helicopter-carrier destroyer *Kaga* had just gone into service, and that its sister ship the *Izumo* was scheduled to go to the South China Sea for drills. Japan, the agency continued, was consistently using a so-called China threat as an excuse for military expansion: China and its neighbors [would not allow](#) Japan to make trouble.

Japanese rebutted criticism of their defense budget by pointing out that the Chinese defense budget had increased by multiple times that of Japan's every year since 1989, typically by double-digits. Moreover, due to accounting differences and lack of transparency, the reported RMB 1.04 trillion (approximately \$152 billion and about 1.3 percent of GDP) is probably only half to a third of the true budget. Japan also has far higher personnel costs than China. According to Beijing's *China Daily*, this year's 7 percent increase – vis-a-vis a projected economic growth rate of 6.5 percent – was a ["sign of confidence."](#) However, *China Daily* erred in saying that the budget had decreased: it was only the rate of growth that was down over the previous year, which is significantly different. Moreover, these and increments from previous years were bolstering ambitious weapons development programs that included hypersonic and a variety of other missiles, space-based capabilities, a second aircraft carrier, and two stealthy fighter jets, the *J-20* and *J-31*.

Beyond weapons development, Japan has noted other emerging threats from China. Several of the islands the PRC had built from reefs in the South China Sea were being militarized. According to an [internal PLA magazine](#) obtained by the independent Japanese news agency *Kyodo*, the Chinese Navy had established its military supremacy in the South China Sea. In February, Japan's National Institute of Information and Communications Technology [reported](#) a 2.4-fold increase in cyberattacks in 2016, to 128.1 billion, against Japanese networks over the previous year, the majority originating from China.

Japanese unease with these threats was aired in discussions between Defense Minister Inada

Tomomi and her Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu, Inada [stating pointedly](#) that how to confront the rise of China is a matter that pertains to the order of the international community. She added that China's infrastructure development through assertive and large-scale land reclamation since 2014 had changed the balance of power in the region, causing concern in Japan over its actions as well as over its efforts to promote activities based on Beijing's self-declared assertions of sovereignty in the East China Sea.

China continued to ridicule Japan's efforts to seek out allies. The imperial couple, who rarely travel abroad, visited Vietnam, [paying homage](#) to a patriotic fighter against French colonial rule who had close ties to Japan. Separately, in what a *Global Times* op-ed referred to as ["dollar diplomacy,"](#) Prime Minister Abe offered generous official development assistance to Vietnam and the two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation on maritime law enforcement. Abe announced that Japan would provide six patrol boats to the Hanoi government. The *Global Times'* cartoonist limned a smiling sumo wrestler offering miniature ships on a sushi tray to a puzzled Vietnamese. Interestingly, although the Japanese was depicted in traditional sumo attire, the Vietnamese wore a Western business suit.



Global Times, 5 March 2017. Illustration by Liu Rui.

Taiwan

A warming trend in Japanese relations with Taiwan that was bound to irritate China followed a landmark election in Taiwan. With President Ma Ying-jeou's reputation for being anti-Japanese, ties that had been warm deteriorated sharply during his pro-China Kuomintang (KMT) administration. In 2016, the

KMT suffered a devastating defeat by Tsai Ing-wen's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), with predictable consequences. As 2017 opened, the Japanese government changed the name of its quasi-official organization for handling relations with Taiwan from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office to the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Organization, with a parallel adjustment from the Taiwan side. At a post-New Year's Day ceremony to mark the change, Japan's representative, Numata Mikio, declared that although Japan-Taiwan relations were at their best, steps should be taken to develop them further. China immediately lodged a protest with Tokyo, with the Foreign Ministry spokesperson [warning Japan](#) against "sending any wrong message to the Taiwan authorities or the international community and cause new interference in Sino-Japanese ties."

Beijing also objected strenuously to the annual report of Japan's National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS). Among other criticisms mentioned at the Chinese Foreign Ministry's [press briefing](#), it had treated Taiwan as a political entity similar to that of China, and had even referred to Taiwan under its formal name, the Republic of China. According to a source in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the Chinese government saw the text of the report before it appeared, and stated its objections, but was told that wording of the NIDS report was not the government's official opinion. It was published without change.

Two weeks later, Beijing's *Global Times* reported that Japan had sparked "outrage" because of a simulated defense exercise wherein Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) jointly fight with the United States military in a military clash involving Taiwan. This constituted gross interference in China's domestic affairs, fomenting intentional strife in cross-strait relations, "especially defense relations." Such "tricks" would harm others as well as itself. Their motive was clear: if China successfully unified Taiwan, Japan would forever lose its chance to contain China and its ability to challenge China's great power status in Asia. Hence, Japan was determined to intervene militarily to prevent unification. The paper cited a Hong Kong [military analyst's view](#) that the People's Liberation Army is always prepared for such a contingency.

Such suspicions must have been reinforced by a [nostalgic article](#) in Tokyo's *Japan Times* whose

author termed Taiwan "where Japanese go to feel at home on vacation," noting that Taiwan had more examples of traditional Japanese architecture than Tokyo, and praising the legacy of those who had the wisdom to preserve them. In late March, Akama Jiro, state minister of internal affairs and communications, paid an [official visit to Taiwan](#), the first such high-level visit since 2006 (i.e., before Ma Ying-jeou's presidency), but which had been described as a private trip. Brushing off Chinese criticism, Prime Minister Abe referred to Taiwan as "an [important partner](#) that shares Japan's values and interests," a none too subtle reference to the PRC's decidedly undemocratic values.

Trade and tourism

Total China-Japan trade [declined](#) again in 2016, with Japanese exports to China down by 6.7 percent and imports from China by 12.4 percent, with contributing factors that included a worldwide slowdown in business, a decrease in the value of the yen, and the transfer of production facilities from China to elsewhere in Asia. China posted a trade surplus for the fifth straight year since 2012. The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) [believes](#) that the downward trend of Japanese investment there has bottomed out. The decreasing trend of investment that began after anti-Japanese riots in 2012 was slightly reversed, with 40.1 percent of JETRO's companies operating in China answering that they expected to expand their businesses there, up 2 points over 2015, while those businesses answering that they were likely to reduce their holdings was 5.3 percent, down 3.5 percent. Not all trade was considered desirable: the Japanese government is considering warning financially troubled electronics giant Toshiba against selling its semiconductor business to a Chinese company, believing that the [technology transfer](#) would be detrimental to Japan's security interests. There were also misgivings about the large number of Chinese investors acquiring property in Japan. While many sellers were delighted, others expressed [concern](#), particularly over the acquisition of the dwindling supply of Kyoto's *machiya*, the traditional homes of pre-modern Japan. Unlicensed operators might remodel them into inns for tourists, or they could be repeatedly resold, destroying the character of the neighborhood.

In late January, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries revealed that 67

unregistered Chinese boats fished near Japan's EEZ off Hokkaido and the Sanriku region in 2016, up 50 percent over 2015. Many of them had used [illegal methods](#) such as drift-netting, leading to further depletion of already dwindling fish stocks and ecological damage, both of which constituted severe risks to the Japanese fishing industry. The same ministry later disclosed that a large number of food items [labelled as Japanese](#) had in fact been manufactured elsewhere. Given their reputation for high standards of safety and cleanliness, many consumers in China and elsewhere prefer Japanese products to domestic products.

The Chinese government, while aware of the deficiencies in the safety and reliability standards of its food and manufactured products, wants to encourage the PRC's citizens to buy domestic. This may have been the motive behind a *Chinese Central Television (CCTV)* program stating that Japanese products from the 10 prefectures affected by the 2011 meltdown at the Fukushima Number One Nuclear Power Plant were being sold by Japanese-operated stores Muji and Aeon. Products were pulled from the shelves despite assurances that the products were from other areas of Japan. Moreover, independent investigators brought in by the Japanese government have certified that foodstuffs from the vicinity of the reactor are radiation-free. Store officials [complained](#) that the *CCTV* report gave the strong impression that it was conveying the position of the Chinese government. Another line of thought, in addition to speculation that the government wanted to encourage consumers to buy domestic items, was that the companies had [failed to pay](#) *CCTV* the bribes it expects to avoid coverage detrimental to their business interests, regardless of whether the charges are true. Such aberrations of journalistic standards are not uncommon in China.

Periodic disputes aside, Chinese tourists remained the [biggest spenders in Japan](#), with revenues up 7.6 percent in 2016 over the previous year and visits continuing strong into 2017. In 2016, Japan was the third most popular travel destination for Chinese tourists, after Thailand and South Korea. This was not an unmitigated blessing, since the visitors' behavior angered many Japanese. Although the majority of the distasteful acts were probably the result of either disrespect or different standards of acceptable behavior, some had a sinister intent. In April, Japanese police placed

two Chinese female tourists on their most-wanted list after [surveillance cameras](#) indicated that they were the perpetrators of repeated acts of vandalism at several shrines in different cities. By the time they were identified, however, the two had already left Japan.

Textbooks and history

The Chinese government was angered at revelations that one of Japan's largest hotel chains, the APA group, had placed in each of its guest rooms a book denying that the Nanjing Massacre had ever taken place and downplaying the sex slavery that took place during the war between the two. According to *Global Times*, more than 300 Chinese residents of Japan staged a protest in Tokyo's Shinjuku Central Park, carrying banners that read "boycott APA, safeguard national dignity," and "free speech requires conscience." The paper reported that Japanese rightwing activists attempted to remove the banners, and that 150 Tokyo police officers had been sent in to keep the peace. Allegedly, Motoya Toshio, chief executive of the APA hotel group and the author of the book, had said that since Chinese tourists make up only 5 percent of the chain's customers, he did not expect the row to affect business. Delegations from China and South Korea, in Japan to participate in the Asian Winter Games, changed their hotel reservations. APA's spokesperson allegedly said that it would not remove the book, but that it would temporarily take all books from APA premises in Sapporo, where the games were to be held, except those deemed acceptable by the Olympic Council of Asia, though [denying](#) that the decision was due to external pressure.

This was not the first time the APA group had made headlines with its rightwing views. In 2008, Gen. Tamogami Toshio, the chief of Japan's Air Self-Defense Force, [made headlines](#) when his book, arguing that Japan was not an aggressor in World War II, won first prize in an essay contest hosted by APA. Tamogami was promptly dismissed for conduct inappropriate for an officer. Although he became a hero to rightwing nationalists, this did not translate into political gain: Tamogami failed in his subsequent bid to become mayor of Tokyo, nor in a separate effort for a seat in the Diet.

Japan's Education Ministry announced revised curriculum guidelines for social studies at the elementary and junior high schools levels, stating more clearly than previously that the

Senkaku Islands are “an inherent part of the territory of Japan,” and suggesting that schools provide training in the martial arts. Chinese media [construed](#) these as an effort at remilitarization that it predicted would be resisted by the Japanese public. China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson [urged](#) Japan to “respect facts and teach the younger generation correct historical views.”

Responding to reports that “beneficial” or “appropriate” content from *Mein Kampf* could be included in reading lists, *Xinhua* [noted](#) that the book had been banned by the German government for 70 years, and that it could not possibly have any beneficial or appropriate content. The motive was, the agency continued, likely to be to encourage nascent militarism.

At the same time, China announced its own textbook [revisions](#), adding six years to the length of the war so that it would henceforth be known as “the 14-year Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression,” generally referred to elsewhere as World War II. The Chinese media was also [intensely critical](#) of Prime Minister Abe for allegedly allowing his name to be used in fundraising activities for “Japan’s first Shintō elementary school,” and for which his wife had agreed to serve as honorary principal. Abe denied the allegations, his wife resigned as honorary principal, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide replied to questions on the government’s involvement by saying it was not aware of what the prime minister’s wife did as an individual.

In a recurring sore spot in Sino-Japanese relations, visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, China [protested](#) when Minister of Internal Affairs Sanae Takaichi and 95 Diet members attended the Spring Festival there on April 21. The prime minister, who did not personally attend, sent a *masakaki* branch, sacred to Shintō, under his official title and name. Japanese who attend explain their visits to the shrine as honoring all those who have fallen in war, while the Chinese government regards them as covert homage to the 14 individuals who were designated Class-A war criminals by an allied tribunal after World War II.

Mutual sniping continued. The Henry Jackson Society, a British think tank with strongly anti-authoritarian views, was revealed to have taken money from the Japanese Embassy in London to oppose the Hinkley Point nuclear power

agreement between the UK and the PRC. The Society argued against the supposition that to halt construction would [irreparably harm](#) British-Chinese relations. Chinese media denounced the embassy’s role as “[despicable](#)” and wondered whether Japanese embassies in other countries were working on similar projects to tarnish the image of China. Another publication [proclaimed](#) that “duplicity, thy other name is Japanese policy,” and linked the Hinkley Point action with the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Only by accepting China’s rise as the present reality and owning up to its war history, it concluded, could Japan hope to succeed in building a brighter future.

The Japanese head of a youth exchange organization was arrested and charged with activities endangering China’s [security](#) when he arrived in Beijing to organize a symposium. And, with no noticeable regret, Chinese media reported that an experimental Japanese mission to clear space junk from earth’s orbit had ended in [failure](#).

The future

April closed on a somewhat more hopeful note. Kanasugi Kenji, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry’s Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau and Wu Dawei, China’s special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs, agreed to aim for a diplomatic [solution](#) to end North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs. And Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Nikai Toshihiro [announced](#) his intention to attend China’s New Silk Road Summit in May. On the other hand, while meeting an unofficial Japanese delegation in Beijing, Premier Li Keqiang said that although China prioritized relations with Japan, it was willing to put the bilateral relationship back on track ... provided that Japan would “reflect on history.”

CHRONOLOGY OF JAPAN-CHINA RELATIONS

JANUARY – APRIL 2017

Jan. 8, 2017: *Sankei Shimbun*, citing unspecified Japanese government sources, states that Chinese government ships entered the waters continuous to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands more than 1,000 times since the Japanese government bought three of the five from private Japanese owners in 2012.

Jan. 18, 2017: First US *F-35B* joint strike fighters arrive at Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station “in support of the defense of Japan and the regional security of the Pacific.”

Jan. 19, 2017: Two Japanese think tanks call for the government to further increase defense spending in response to US President Donald Trump’s call for Japan to cover more of the costs of keeping US troops there.

Jan. 24, 2017: Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries reveals that 67 unregistered Chinese boats fished near Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off Hokkaido and the Sanriku region in 2016, up 50 percent over 2015, many of them using illegal methods.

Jan. 28, 2017: China objects to the APA hotel group’s placing in guest rooms a book that denies that the Nanjing massacre ever happened.

Jan. 28, 2017: Japan’s Education Ministry announces a revised curriculum for elementary schools that says the Takeshima and Senkaku islands are an inherent part of Japan’s territory and adding to junior high school curricula that there is no territorial dispute with regard to the Senkaku Islands.

Jan. 29, 2017: London’s *Daily Mail* reveals that the Japanese government was paying a British think tank to express concerns about China’s involvement in the UK’s Hinkley Point nuclear plant; *Xinhua* terms this a despicable anti-China scandal.

Jan. 30, 2017: China warns Japan against interfering in Taiwan affairs after hearing that the militaries of the two were conducting a simulated exercise.

Feb. 4, 2017: China complains after US Secretary of Defense James Mattis confirms that the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty covers the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.

Feb. 5, 2017: Japan’s National Institute of Information and Communications Technology reports a 2.4-fold increase in cyberattacks in 2016 over 2015, the majority originating from China.

Feb. 5, 2017: Japan-China Friendship Association is officially established in Okinawa.

Feb. 6, 2016: China’s *Global Times* reports that a Japanese mission to clear space junk from earth’s orbit was a failure.

Feb. 6, 2017: China’s Ministry of Defense says that Japanese Self-Defense Forces participation in US freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea would cross a “red line.” Japanese Defense Minister Inada Tomomi reiterates that the SDF would not deploy to the South China Sea with the US Navy.

Feb. 7, 2017: *China Global Television Network (CGTV)* announces that three Chinese Coast Guard vessels sailed around the Diaoyu Islands.

Feb. 7, 2017: *Global Times* reports that Chinese and South Korean athletes changed hotel accommodations in response to the APA hotel group’s placing of a book denying that the Nanjing Massacre actually happened.

Feb. 11, 2017: *China Daily* cites Ruth Benedict’s *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* as finding the roots of Japanese duplicity as a results of fear of the unknown and of failure.

Feb. 15, 2017: China's minister of education complains about Japan's revised curriculum guidelines.

Feb. 21, 2017: *People's Daily* announces that Chinese textbooks will henceforth state that the starting time for the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression will be moved from 1937 to 1931 "to fully reflect the crimes committed by Japanese troops during the conflict."

Feb. 23, 2017: CCTV announces that a Japanese legislator suggested that the dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands be referred to an international arbitration tribunal as well as the issue of deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to Japan.

Feb. 24, 2017: *Xinhua* reports that Prime Minister Abe underwent a grilling from opposition parties over his name being used to solicit funds for building a nationalist elementary school.

Feb. 24, 2017: China's Foreign Ministry lodges solemn representations to its Japanese counterpart over National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) 2017 report for sending the wrong messages to Taiwan "independence secessionist forces."

Feb. 25, 2017: Japanese national engaged in bilateral youth exchange programs is arrested in Beijing on spying charges.

Feb. 28, 2017: Japanese Coast Guard announces that China conducted 63 seabed surveys inside Japan's East China Sea EEZ over the five years from 2012 to 2016 without prior authorization.

Feb. 28, 2017: According to the Chinese Tourism Academy, Japan is the third most visited country for Chinese citizens, after Thailand and South Korea. Chinese buyers are also increasingly active in the Japanese housing market.

March 3, 2017: Japanese Coast Guard announces it will install video transmission devices on all 12 of its large patrol vessels charged with monitoring the security situation around the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, enabling the Office of the Prime Minister as well as high-ranking JCG officials to watch the videos in real time.

March 5, 2017: *Global Times* describes closer relations between Vietnam and Japan as a strategic partnership built on empty rhetoric.

March 13 2017: China announces 7 percent defense budget increase to \$152 billion, or 1.3 percent of GDP.

March 15, 2017: Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop supports Japan's right to sail through the South China Sea.

March 17, 2017: Singapore's *Channel News Asia* reports that France, in a clear message to China, sent an amphibious carrier to lead exercise drills with UK troop-carrying helicopters and Japanese and US personnel around Tinian Island in the western Pacific.

March 20, 2017: Japan's *Kyodo* reports an internal Chinese military magazine has declared that it has established dominance in the South China Sea, and that it has normalized patrols around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands since 2011.

March 20, 2017: CCTV reports that food products from the area near the Fukushima nuclear meltdown are being sold in China, resulting in a removal of products from the shelves despite a refutation issued by the importer.

March 22, 2017: CCTV castigates Japanese design firm Muji for selling items manufactured in Tokyo and banned since the 2011 nuclear meltdown, although the products were actually manufactured in Osaka and Fukui, both being even further from the meltdown than Tokyo.

March 23, 2017: *Global Times* notes that Japan's commissioning of a large helicopter-carrying destroyer would increase its navy's strike capability.

March 23, 2017: Japan government expresses concerns over financially troubled Japanese giant Toshiba selling its computer chip business to China's Tsinghua Unigroup Ltd.

March 25, 2017: China complains after a Japanese Cabinet member visits Taiwan.

March 28, 2017: Diet passes 2017 defense budget, up 1.4 percent, or less than 0.926 percent of GDP.

March 29, 2017: Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) panel urges Japan to acquire pre-emptive strike capabilities and to give immediate consideration to introducing THAAD.

March 29, 2017: SDF ships will begin to protect US military vessels for the first time in peacetime, to improve deterrence against North Korea's missile development and China's expansion of its maritime environment.

March 29, 2017: US military analyst urges Japan to undertake construction and station personnel on the Senkaku Islands regardless of Chinese objections.

March 30, 2017: Prime Minister Abe refers to Taiwan as an important partner.

April 1, 2017: *Yomiuri* urges Japanese government to address potential "gray zone crisis" as China seeks to take the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

April 7, 2017: Leading Japanese commentator expresses concern that President Trump will use the US-Japanese Mutual Security Treaty as leverage for trade concessions from China, thus weakening the alliance.

April 10, 2017: Food products mislabeled as Japanese discovered in Chinese cities.

April 11, 2017: Premier Li Keqiang says that China prioritizes relations with Japan.

April 14, 2017: Japanese Defense Ministry says Chinese planes accounted for 73 percent of the record number of SDF scrambles against foreign aircraft approaching Japanese air space in 2016.

April 14, 2017: Japanese police put two Chinese women on a wanted list after acts of vandalism were committed at several shrines and temples they visited.

April 20, 2017: *Xinhua* complains about revised Japanese textbook guidelines allowing "beneficial" or "appropriate" content from *Mein Kampf*.

April 21, 2017: China protests when 95 Japanese lawmakers and a Cabinet member visit the Yasukuni Shrine's Spring Festival.

April 25 2017: LDP Secretary General Nikai Toshihiro announces he will attend Silk Road meeting in China in May.

April 26, 2017: Chinese and Japanese diplomats agree to use political and diplomatic means to deal with the danger of North Korea's development of weapons of mass destruction.

