

Andrew L. Oros and Steve Clemons 著「China, Japan need help to stop crisis from escalating--and fast」Special to The Daily Yomiuri デイリーヨミウリ 2010年9月25日刊を読む

## China, Japan need help to stop crisis from escalating--and fast

- 1 . The political crisis now escalating in the East China Sea over the collisions of a Chinese fishing trawler with Japan Coast Guard vessels has the potential to significantly redefine regional relationships--and not for the better. A rising Chinese geostrategic plate is scraping right against Japan's national interests and ego--and the United States, long a buffer between the two, seems powerless to act. Crisis control infrastructure needed--yesterday.
- 2 . To quickly recap, the captain of a Chinese fishing trawler is alleged to have purposely rammed a JCG vessels just off the Senkaku/Diaoyu island chain, a disputed set of rocks in the sea between China and Japan that the two have wrestled over for decades. The Japanese videoed the incident, then arrested the ship's captain, and later released the ship and its crew back to China. Although Japan has just announced that it will release the captain, national raw nerves on both sides have been exposed and badly aggravated.
- 3 . Dry timber meets match. Since the incident, a previously planned effort to discuss joint resource development around the disputed islands has been cancelled; an international school in Tianjin with young Japanese students has been the target of attack by angry Chinese citizens; a thousand Japanese children invited to visit the Shanghai World Expo were abruptly disinvited; chat rooms at the Chinese newspaper Global Times have been shut down because of anonymous calls for Japanese citizens to be slaughtered; and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao--demanding that the boat captain be immediately released--has ruled out meeting with Prime Minister Naoto Kan and suspended Chinese government contacts with Japan. China is stomping its feet, glaring at Japan's political leadership, and threatening that things may get worse.
- 4 . To be fair to the Chinese perspective, there are many "encounters" between Chinese fishing boats and Japan Coast Guard ships around these islands that have not resulted in arrests and this sort of diva vs diva drama. Japan's forces regularly board many Chinese vessels they deem to be infringing on claimed Japanese waters, but no incident has gone this far. The captain's arrest is so unusual that it has bred suspicions of intent even within Japan. One

leading Liberal Democratic Party member told us that he suspected that the arrest of the captain was engineered by Naoto Kan and the Democratic Party of Japan to look less militarily spineless than many accuse them of, a viewpoint widely expressed in the Chinese media as well--rightly or wrongly.

- 5 . Japan's government has not publicly released its video of the incident--and, interestingly, the Chinese media that has been running this drama at the top of its news for weeks has not featured interviews with the Chinese trawler's crew.
- 6 . But events of the day aside, the bigger issue that stakeholders in the region should worry about is that there is no broad conflict-management system for Japan and China to weather such crises--no hotline, no protocols of significance that help both sides to pause, reconsider, and pivot in ways that would sidestep the possibility of an out-of-control political escalation that could eventually have substantial military and geostrategic consequences. In fact, both in Japan and China there are forces at work that seek to take advantage of moments of hyperventilation between the two--and that promote miscommunication and quick escalation--because of their passions over unresolved grievances.
- 7 . The United States has stood uncharacteristically on the sidelines of this dispute, a portent for how regional relations will increasingly flow in the future as American relative power in the region declines. In this case, Washington is torn between its alliance relationship with Japan and its desire to steady relations with China as well as a strong preference for peaceful regional relations.
- 8 . In contrast to Japan and China, the United States and China have faced similar crises in the past and have developed a first stage of mechanisms to resolve them. The establishment of a military-to-military hotline and a maritime cooperation agreement between China and the United States has helped. Even more important, however, was the political will to take power away from smaller players in the broad march of history--fishing captains, nationalist zealots, and so-called "netizens"--and buffer the strategic understanding, both positive and negative, between China and the United States from those who seek to alter the relationship's dynamics.
- 9 . Even if the current crisis is resolved given the announcement of the intended release of the captain, China will still insist that Japan lacks the right to police territory China claims as its own, but at least the wind will be taken out of the sails of nationalists in both countries and hopefully both parties will avoid bundling all aspects of their relationship together and take

back control of their national fates from a single fisherman. All eggs in a single basket is not a mature way for China and Japan to behave. They have a responsibility not only to their citizens but to the world to do better.

10 . Without a better developed crisis management framework, China and Japan--and pontificating nationalists inside each--are bound to irresponsibly exploit future such incidents and in doing so risk undermining the regional dynamism and growth that have earned admiration from the rest of the world.

[コメント]

ワシントン大学助教授で、「中日米の安全保障協力の研究」を日本財団の阿部フェローとして北京大学と慶應義塾大学でなさっているオロス氏の今回の事件に関する分析は的を得ている。関係は本質に先立つ。紛争を大きくしないための外交上のしくみを早急に整えるべきと私も考える。

- 2010年9月25日林 明夫記 -