

Solutions to the china-japan spat research paper

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



China and Japan are the biggest economies in Asia. They are also among the top ten biggest economies in the world and are thus of great significance to the world economy. China is the biggest and most important trading partner to Japan. A lot of good manufacture in Japan such as electronics and cars are sold in the Chinese market. The trade between these two countries has also been favored by the fact that the two countries are neighbors and hence it is easy to transport goods and services between the two countries. To maintain this beneficial relationship, both countries must promote a healthy bilateral relationship. However, bilateral relationships between the two countries have suffered a blow following the recent island's row (reuters. com).

Both countries claim the disputed series of five islands. These islands are called Senkaku in Japan and in china they are referred to as Diaoyu islands. The row started when the Japanese government claimed that it had bought the islands from a private owner. The Japanese security forces patrolled the disputed islands and even raised a Japanese flag in the islands. This attracted angry response from the Chinese citizens; they started a series of anti-Japan protests. The Chinese people staged the biggest demonstrations against the Japanese since the last wave of anti-Japan protests in 2005. The Chinese citizens argued that the Japanese undermined their sovereignty by taking over islands they believed to be in the Chinese territory. The protestors took to the streets destroying shops owned by Japanese and shops that sold Japanese products. The protestors also destroyed cars made by Japanese manufacturers. In retaliation, the Japanese attacked shops that were owned by Chinese citizens in Japan and those that stocked Chinese governments. These demonstrations brought the relationships between the

two countries at its lowest in many years.

Many commentators argue that the Chinese government did not do enough to arrest the situation. The Chinese government is known for its stringent measures taken against demonstrators in the countries. However, in this particular case, the government seemed to let demonstrators to protest in the streets and even vandalize property. The anti-Japan campaign was given a major boost by the social media. The protestors communicated through social networking sites allowing them arrange and coordinate their protests. Some anti-Japan campaigners also persuaded people to boycott consuming Japanese products. This worsened trade between the two countries as some Japanese also campaigned against Chinese products.

The Japanese- Chinese clash will inevitably draw other nations into the conflict. The United States is a good example. Japan and America have been having very close ties in the recent past. As a key ally of Japan, the Americans are most likely to take sides in this conflict and support Japan. This situation is quite risky as Japan and china seek to increase pressure and threats to each other so that they do not appear to be weak. Each side will have to affirm its ability to protect its territory and manage threats from other countries. This situation was also escalated by the rise of china as a threat to the United States as the economic super power. The Chinese government had also been accused by the United States that it had been recently investing in defense and military as if it was preparing for war. China's first aircraft carrier that was launched earlier in the year was seen as a way to intimidate Japan and its allies. The protestors in china carried posters with a message that the Chinese should declare war against Japan.

All these factors strongly indicated that an armed conflict between the two countries was imminent and unavoidable.

Trade and international summits would have provided a perfect platform and motivation for the two countries to settle their disputes. However, the Chinese government cancelled several meetings scheduled with Japanese leaders and their allies. The United States secretary of state had been scheduled to hold an important meeting with the Chinese vice president, this meeting was cancelled following the perceived support accorded to Japan by the Americans in the islands dispute. The Chinese government leaders boycotted international summits in Japan's and other parts of the world where Japanese and American leaders were set to attend. Some leaders had suggested that the country should boycott International Monetary Fund's and World Bank's meetings. These boycotts asserted the significance of china as a major stakeholder in the world's economy but did not serve to solve the territorial dispute with Japan. Some people argued that the boycotting of these meetings by the Chinese government was a show of might as some meetings seemed incomplete or paralyzed in the absence of this economic giant. It may also be seen as a way of challenging the United States supremacy as the world leader and the most important country in directing world's business forms.

These events escalated tensions between the countries completely limiting trade between the two industries. The Chinese at one point had banned the exportation of crucial inputs in the Japanese manufacturing firms as way punishing them. These tensions adversely affected the tourism sector in both countries. A lot of tourists travel from china to tour Japan and vice versa.

However following tensions between the two countries tours and travel companies reported that numerous tours had been cancelled. Tourists from both countries who had planned to travel to the other country were forced to cancel their trips amid rising fears of being attacked. The Japanese foreign ministry at one point issued an advisory to its citizens in china not to do anything that may draw attention that they were Japanese or go near the protesters. The detestation of the Japanese had risen sharply amongst the Chinese citizens following the arrest of Chinese nationals in or near the disputed island. The Japanese were accused of arresting Chinese fishermen who were fishing near the islands. Japanese security forces arrested Chinese activists who had sailed to the islands in the disputed islands in protest of the Japanese occupation.

SOLUTIONS

Each government needs to reassure its citizens that it is capable of protecting them against foreign and domestic threats. It is also important that each country asserts its sovereignty (Hsuing 167). This gives the citizens confidence that their country is controlled by its citizens and that the country is not dictated by outsiders. A sovereign state should be governed by the rules set and administered by the countries itself without undue influence from others. This means that the the disputed islands had greater significance than the less than \$ 30 million price that the Japanese government claimed to have bought its private owner. It is therefore reasonable, for each country that believes that its territory has been trespassed to protect it relentlessly. Government leaders may end up losing the confidence of their subjects if they give in to pressure from other

countries especially where their rights are being unjustifiably curtailed. In the case of Japan and china, each country has the right to reasonably protect the islands if they genuinely believe that its part of their territory. China is known to have numerous boundary disagreements with its smaller neighboring nations. It has therefore, been important that the Chinese do not set an example to them that it can be pushed easily. Japan on the other hand, may not want to appear as if it is being bullied by china. This comes at a time when china has overtaken Japan economically. It is however, imperative that both nations seek an amicable solution to this row. This would benefit both countries as they are interdependent on each other for markets for their products and also as a source of raw material inputs. The restoration of peace and tranquility between these neighbors would also enhance market confidence in the region.

THE AMERICANS AND WESTERN POWERS SHOULD BACK OFF

The United States has been very instrumental in ensuring that peace is maintained in all parts of the world. However, trying to control the world “single handedly” may be received with hostility by some countries. The United States has been wary of china’s growing influence all over the world in recent times. The Chinese have become the leading investors in Africa and have ties with numerous African countries. The Chinese have also increased their influence in the pacific region. This has made the Americans to be cautious of the Chinese overtaking them as the world’s superpowers. This was escalated by the increase in military budgetary allocations in recent years in china. The Chinese army has also been increasing in numbers year

by year; they have also invested heavily in technologically advanced military equipments. The Chinese also drew American's concerns following their increased quest for space exploration. The American may have perceived that the Chinese were preparing for possible armed conflicts with other nations. The Americans responded to these perceived threats by seeking stronger military ties with countries in the pacific region. The Americans have strengthened their military relationships with countries such as, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan. The Americans seems to have taken their military forces and equipments to the Chinese doorsteps (chinadaily. com). This may be viewed by the Chinese as an attempt by the Americans to contain them militarily. This may have made the Japanese to be bolder in challenging the Chinese stand on the disputed islands. The Japanese may feel that that the Americans would support them in case of armed conflict with the Chinese. On the other side, the Chinese may have felt that the Americans are intimidating them using the Japanese and daring them. This may have worsened the situation with the Chinese wanting to prove that they are not afraid of the Americans. The Chinese may see this as an opportunity to challenge the supremacy of the Americans.

In a similar dispute between two east African counties, Kenya and Uganda, the international community did not interfere. The two countries claimed ownership of Migingo islands in the Lake Victoria. Kenyans living in the island were victimized by Ugandan security officers who were deployed following the dispute. Tensions were high as most Kenyans pressured the government to take military action against Uganda. Despite this, the western nations and

the Americans did not intervene even when armed conflict appeared to be imminent. The countries were left to settle the dispute themselves with minimal interference from foreign countries. This worked well despite earlier fears of a war breaking out. This seems to be a plausible solution for the china-japan row. If the countries were left to settle the matter themselves without interference, both countries would reach a reasonable solution considering that they are heavily interdependent economically.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL SUMMITS AND MEETINGS

As discussed earlier, the Chinese government officials avoided meetings where Japanese and American leaders were scheduled to attend. This limited the chances that the leaders of the two countries would discuss the dispute. Attending these meetings would have allowed leaders of the two countries and their allies to talk through the matter after the meetings were over or during break sessions. It is also possible that such an issue would be discussed in the summits and the impacts and possible solutions assessed. If the Chinese leaders had attended international summits in Japan, it may have sent a signal that would ease the extreme dislike between the countries. The Chinese should also consider having meetings with allies of Japan such as the United States. A senior American leader, the secretary of state, had an arranged meeting cancelled following the islands dispute. The Chinese government leaders should consider having such meeting as they can reach an acceptable deal with such key allies who can convince the Japanese to relax their stand. Such a dispute can best be handled through dialogue between the two countries. Such dialogue does not necessarily

have to conclude on the issue but they, may agree on the way the situation would be handled. As in the case of Migingo islands dispute between Kenya and Uganda, both countries selected teams of professionals including independent surveyors to determine in which country the islands are located. The Chinese and Japanese leaders may agree on a similar border conflict resolution strategy. Such a move would reduce the tension in both countries. The Chinese president had previously declined to meet with Japanese leaders to discuss the islands row. The president should make use of such requests and discuss with the other party the way forward. This would give him a chance to expressly state his countries stand. It would also solve to defuse tensions as the citizens would feel that the matter is being dealt with at the highest level and hence there would be no need to take action themselves.

SETTING AND RESPECTING REGIONAL AGREEMENTS

The East Asia region is an area prone to territorial dispute. The countries signed a commitment in 2002 known as the declaration of conduct of countries in South China Sea. This declaration stated that countries would seek to avoid territorial disputes and even where they arise they should be settled using peaceful means. These countries committed themselves not to engage military interventions in cases of such disputes (Bush 73). China and Japan were among the signatories of this agreement and as such they should respect it and settle their dispute peacefully. Such agreements should be respected even by countries from other regions; it is sometimes the case that the smaller countries use developed countries from other regions to

mine in disputed areas. These countries such as Germany, France and Britain should restrain from dealing in disputed territories. This would ensure that they are not drawn into the East Asian territorial conflicts. These countries should ensure that they are not seen as prepared to defend the small countries militarily in the event that an armed conflict was to start.

AGREE TO DENOUNCE THEIR CLAIMS OVER THE ISLANDS

The conflict over the islands is not a new issue to both countries; they had a similar conflict in the 1960's. Both countries decided to leave the dispute to be settled in the future and that no country would lay claim to the islands then. This agreement led to over 40 years of peace between the two countries as far as the islands are concerned (Vyaz 207). The spat over ownership of these islands rekindled when the Japanese went against the earlier agreement and claimed ownership. These islands are also claimed by Taiwan as being part of its territory. The three countries should seek to seal a deal where they all drop claims upon the islands. They may sign a legally binding agreement to stay without claiming the ownership of the islands for a specified period of time or forever. In this case no country would appear to have won or lost, the islands are claimed to assert authority and not economic gain. All the parties concerned should agree that they should cease to carry out any activities in and around the islands. These countries should agree on provisions for fining the party that go against the agreement. However, such agreements should be crafted cautiously as the Chinese may feel they have lost and hold destructive anti-Japanese rallies and vice versa.

Conclusion

All the solutions suggested above are viable solutions in defusing the territorial disputes between China and Japan. The leaders of the two countries should consider the strategic significance or benefit of either finding a compromise or pushing for the ownership of the islands. It is clear that the longer the dispute takes to settle and the more hostile it is, the more the negative impacts on the economies of both countries. The solution that seems to be best suited for the situation is dialogue between the two parties. Both governments should consider employing conflict management specialists, business analyst's surveyors and lawyers to help in settling the dispute. This would ensure that the most suitable solution is arrived at without negatively impacting on the economies of both countries. Both countries should engage in serious discussions on how to settle the dispute and commit themselves to deal with protests in their respective countries. This could be done by using force to disperse protestors in both countries or by reassuring them through speeches that the matter is being addressed. Whichever method is applied in resolving the dispute, economic welfare of the citizens of countries, the region and the world at large need to be considered.

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