

Lessons from Ukraine War in Maritime East Asia

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Introduction

It has been passed a year since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, in the name of "Special military operation." Many lessons have been learned from the war in Ukraine, in which a permanent member of the UN Security Council openly invaded a UN member state. The war is said to be a confrontation between totalitarian countries and like-minded democratic countries.



(<https://www.nippon.com/ja/in-depth/a08104/>)



(<https://www.nippon.com/ja/news/fnn20220405342569/>)

In East Asia, tensions are rising in US-China relations over differences in values, China-Taiwan relations over the unification issue, and Japan-China relations over the Senkaku Islands. The East China Sea, where the Senkaku Islands are located, is said to be in a touch-and-go situation because of China's wolf-warrior diplomacy.

1 Lessons Japan Learned from Ukrainian War

It was reconfirmed that the causes of war between nations are not only political but also geopolitical. The deep-rooted expansionist tendencies in Russian society were consistent. Warfare in society and human cognition have important meaning. Russia violated international law and made its position in the international community extremely bad. If there is legitimacy under international law and the support of international public opinion can be obtained, even small and medium-sized countries can compete with large powers to a certain extent.

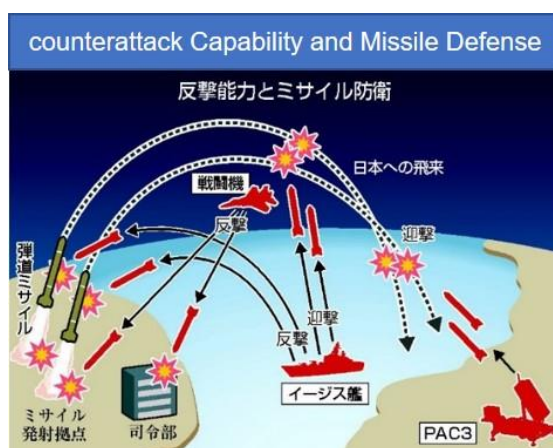
What is most important is that Japan itself has the will and ability to defend itself. Showing a clear stance that the U.S. will protect Japan against threats from China will create a large deterrent. Japan should hold close consultations with the U.S. to further ensure the credibility of extended deterrence. Ability to

continuously obtain the necessary weapons is extremely important, and the existence of the industrial and technological bases that make this possible is essential.

2 Japan's National Security Strategy and Japan-U. Relations

(1) Japan's Security Related 3 Documents

Russia's invasion of Ukraine forced Japan to think about the realities of the World. Japan's Cabinet decided the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy and Defense Buildup Plan on 16 December last year. The maintenance and protection of the international order based on international law is newly added as Japan's national interest. Japan decided to possess counter counterattack capability in preparation for missile attacks.



(<https://www.jiji.com/jc/article?k=2022121600931&g=pol>)

Strategic approach and 3 key measures in the strategy areas are as follows.

- ① Maintaining and developing a free and open international order and strengthening cooperation with allies and like-minded countries.
- ② Deepening security cooperation with the U.S., such as Japan-U.S. operational coordination, improvement of interoperability, cooperation in cyber and space fields, and promotion of equipment and technology cooperation.
- ③ Strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance to deter unilateral changes or attempts to change the status quo by force.

(2) Strengthening Japan-U.S. Relationship

Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (2+2) was held on January 11, 2023. The Committee strongly opposed China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea. The committee reconfirmed that Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands. And the

Committee recognized that attempts to unilaterally change borders by force undermine the very foundations of the international order.



(https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/na/na1/us/page1_001475.html)

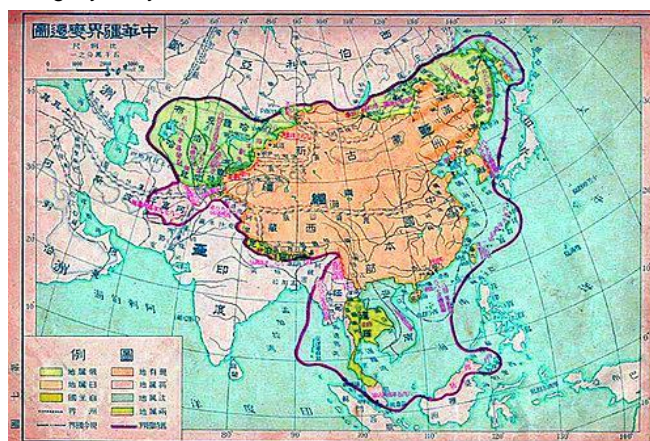
Kishida-Biden Summit was held on January 13, 2023. President Biden has expressed his full support for the fundamental strengthening of defense capabilities, substantial increases in defense budgets, and possession of counterattack capabilities. The two leaders agreed to emphasize the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and promote the peaceful settlement of the China-Taiwan issue.

3 China's Wolf Warrior Diplomacy in the East China Sea

(1) China's National Dream

Xi Jinping revealed that the Chinese Dream is to “the rejuvenation of the great Chinese nation” in 2012. It is said that Xi Jinping's China is within the scope of this map.

The largest map of the Qing Dynasty

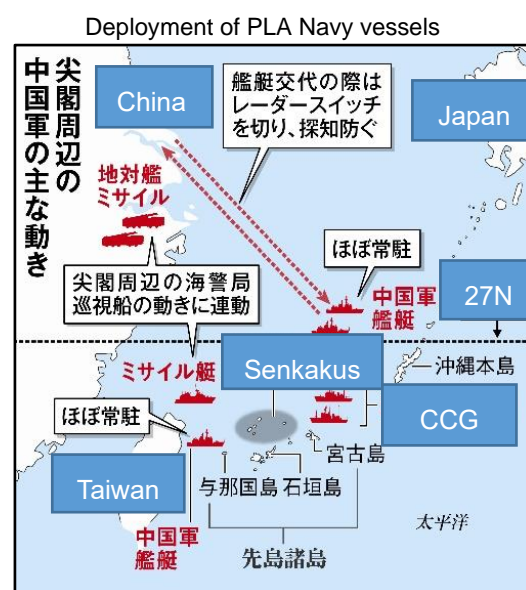


(<https://d.hatena.ne.jp/keyword/%E5%9B%BD%E6%81%A5%E5%9C%B0%E5%9B%B3>)

China tried to realize his dream of making China a maritime power. Ans China established China Coast Guard in 2013 and put it under the command of the Central Military Committee in June 2018. China intends to expel the U.S. Force from Asia and wants China to be the sole superpower in the region. Then, China needs domination of the sea and air route to the Pacific Ocean. Due to the strategic location of Japanese Senkaku Islands, the PRC needs to control and/or occupy the Islands to realizes his ambitions above. Presently, China seeks to control the Miyako Strait, which is China’s main route to the Pacific Ocean.

(2) China’s Wolf Warrior Diplomacy

The CCG law authorizes the CCG to take the necessary warning and control measures to expel foreign ship from the waters under the China’s jurisdiction. According to the Law, in situations related to sovereignty and maritime rights, a CCG ship can use weapons. On the other hand, the JCG Act stipulates that JCG ships may use a weapon within the extent deemed reasonably necessary. However, this provision is not applicable to foreign warships and ships operated by foreign governments.



4 Japan’s Senkaku Islands

Japan's Senkaku Islands, which are a matter of concern between Japan and China. In 1885, the Okinawa prefecture officials landed and conducted investigations of the Senkaku Islands which were terra nullius at the time. Japan incorporated the Senkaku Islands to Japan’s territory on 14 January 1895.

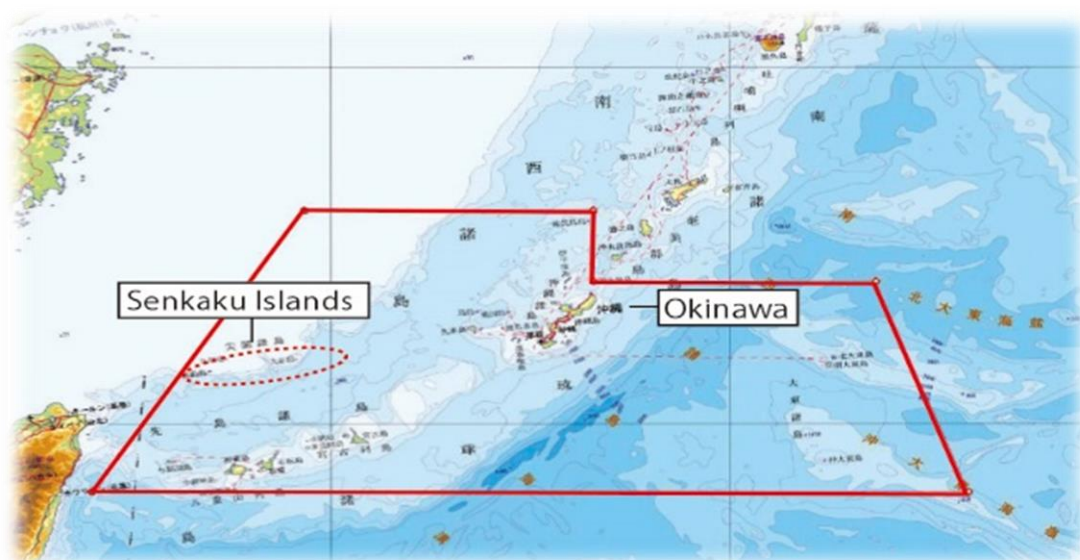
The Peace Treaty with Japan placed the Ryukyu Islands under the U.S. Administration in 1952. The U.S. Ryukyu government continued valid control over the Senkaku Islands. The U.S. returned the Ryukyu Islands including the Senkaku Islands to Japan in 1972. The Senkaku Islands were explicitly included

in the areas returned to Japan in the Agreed Minutes attached to the Okinawa Reversion Agreement.

China suddenly started to claim of territorial sovereignty without any 'title' based on international law in 1971. China's first assertions of the territorial claims were 76 years after Japan's cabinet decision of incorporation. China insists that the Senkaku Islands were not terra nullius but inherent territory of China when Japan incorporated the Islands in 1895. China bases its assertion on peculiar and skewed interpretations of historical documents.



(https://www.spf.org/islandstudies/jp/info_library/senkaku-islands-05-industry--05_industry002.html)



(https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/images/qa/img01_1.jpg)

5 Increasing Risk Between JCG Ship and CCG Ship

(1) China's Hybrid Strategy

The Xi Jinping administration has publicly stated that the Senkaku Islands are part of Taiwan and Taiwan is part of China. There is a possibility of mass water

discharge and/or ramming against a JCG ship, such as a CCG ship did against a Vietnamese Coast Guard ship in the South China Sea.

JCG ships must tackle the China's hybrid strategy which deploys CCG ships on the front and PLA Navy vessels at the rear. If JCG ships are excluded by the CCG ships from the territorial waters around the Senkakus, the world would consider it the loss of Japan's valid control over the Islands. Japan will strive to prevent the Senkaku Islands from being taken over by China and will never give up on them.

(2) Xi Jinping's Insatiable Ambition

Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping are said to have insatiable ambitions. Putin's aggression made a big impression on world strategic values. One of the reasons for Putin's attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force was his historical view that Ukraine is eternally tied to Russia. By the same token, Xi Jinping considers Taiwan a part of its inherent territory. Xi Jinping is carefully watching the fate of Putin's gamble and, by so doing, consider the timing of when China starts unilateral invasion of Taiwan.

In August 2022, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. Immediately after that, China conducted large-scale military exercises in 6 exercise areas around Taiwan, increasing the tension in the Taiwan Strait.



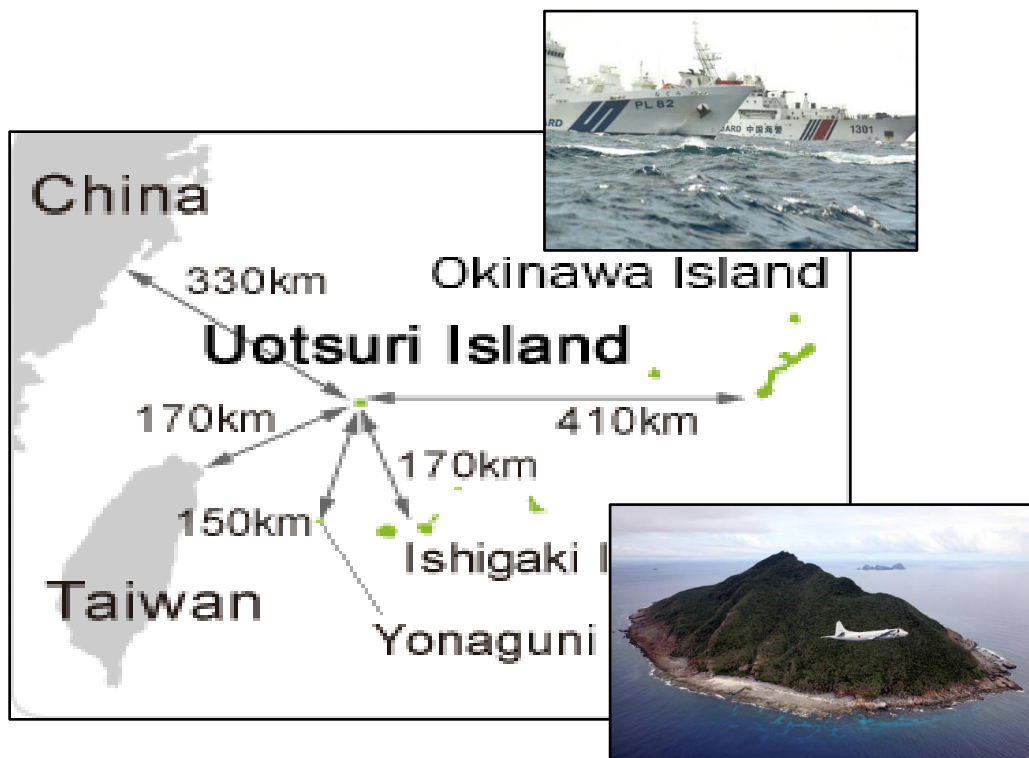
(<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/nancy-pelosi-visit-china-holds-military-drills-close-to-taiwan-shores-1983284-2022-08-03>)

The exercises conducted by China encircling Taiwan may be a dry run for the actual Taiwan unification war plan.

Xi Jinping explicitly mentioned his future course of action on the day the party congress opened. Xi Jinping said he wants a peaceful reunification of Taiwan, but never promises to renounce the use of force. He strongly discouraged US intervention by stating that the target of the use of force or necessary measures would be "external forces."

Conclusion

In the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, potential clashes between CCG ships and JCG ships may trigger the breakdown of deterrence and lead to small armed clashes in the East China Sea. There are serious concerns that it would escalate into a large-scale military conflict in the region. Equally, concerns are rising that China may attempt to reunify Taiwan by force in the next 5 years or less. It would be great that enhanced security cooperation between Japan and the U.S. can thwart Xi Jinping's ambitions and ease tensions in the East China Sea.



(<https://www.zakzak.co.jp/soc/news/210219/pol2102190001-n1.html>) 日中巡視船

(https://www.jiji.com/jc/d4?p=kss816-jlp11556205&d=d4_ter) 魚釣島

(<https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/index.html>) 魚釣島周辺域

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