

## **Japan- Taiwan Airspace Management Corporation – Issues and Measures**

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### **Rising military tensions.**

As the U.S.-China confrontation intensifies, China's military pressure on Taiwan has been increasing. Taiwan media reports that the highest number of Chinese aircraft crossing the median line across the Taiwan Strait has been recorded this year in 30 years. In total, more than 200 Chinese aircraft flew into the air defense identification zone in the southwestern part of Taiwan and more than 1,000 Chinese warships reportedly sailed in the waters around Taiwan. According to the Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense, not only the frequency, but a number of aircraft models have been identified, including the cutting edge J-16 fighter jet and the Y-8 intelligence-gathering aircraft. It is believed that China feels threatened by the Taiwanese authorities' proximity to the United States and issues a warning to the United States.

### **Japan's eyes are focused on nothing but the Senkaku Islands**

For Japan, China's pressure on Taiwan is not just a matter of fire on the opposite shore. Chinese Coast Guard vessels have been sailing in the connecting and territorial waters of the Senkaku Islands for total of 283 days this year, the most ever. Furthermore, since last year, Chinese naval vessels warned Japan Coast Guard aircraft patrolling the airspace over and around the islands telling “You are flying in Chinese airspace” or “You are approaching Chinese airspace” over the radio.

In May of this year, the Chinese magazine named “艦船知識” published a simulation of the liberation of Taiwan on YouTube. This kind of simulation is reportedly sold in video game software, but from my view, it's not just an entertainment game but it shows a plausible scenario. It's a full-scale military invasion that begins with ballistic missile attacks on Taiwan's military bases, followed by missile attacks by naval vessels and bombers and attackers flight, then ground forces liberate the main land Taiwan. In parallel with the missile attacks on Taiwan's military bases, the East Sea Fleet from the East China Sea and the South Sea Fleet from the South China Sea destroyed Taiwan's naval vessels in the waters around Taiwan. From various air bases across the continent, fighters and bombers attack military bases and other targets from the eastern, northern and western airspace of the main island. Needless to say, their approaching route would include the airspace around Japan's South West Islands. There is a high probability that our territory will be invaded

even if PLA does not have intent to attack or invade Japan or the U.S. forces in Japan. Unfortunately, current rise of military tensions and their effects are rarely reported in Japan. Most Japanese are unaware of the fact that China's provocations against Taiwan and the creation of a fait-accompli on patrolling what they call their territorial islands are one step ahead of the rudder. No, they may be pretending not to notice it.

### **Now is the time for sharing a "Common Operational Pictures (COP)"**

The Japan Air Self Defense Force (JASDF) alert mission area is ruled in the air defense identification zone (ADIZ). The western limit is the north-south line that intersects the airspace over Yonaguni Island. Although communications and electronic intelligence and radar surveillance extends beyond the ADIZ, the JASDF fighter jets do not fly beyond it. Japanese politicians are not very aware of the security implications of the situation in Taiwan, which has a history of being considered untouchable and taboo due to its political relationship with China. Economic relations with Taiwan depend on the private sector with minimum involvement of the government. And the security relations are almost nothing. Not speaking about a full-scale invasion of Taiwan, but in case of the event of a military collision around the Taiwanese islands or the Senkaku Islands, it is essential for Japan and Taiwan to cooperate in securing air superiority and managing their airspace. This is not a hypothetical situation; it will happen tomorrow. What we need to do now is for the relevant authorities of Japan and Taiwan to exchange information on the airspace. Although necessary communication is conducted between Japanese and Taiwanese aviation bureaus, coast guards, or fisheries bureaus, there is almost no coordination between the military authorities.

The JASDF operates a hotline with the ROK Air Force operations center under the Japan-Korea Accident Prevention Agreement. The aim is to avoid accidental collisions by exchanging information about the airspace tracks via voice calls. It's a minimum exchange of information necessary between operators, but it is very effective in identifying the air tracks. Setting up a hotline between the JASDF operations center in Naha and the Taiwanese Air Force's operations center is not technologically difficult, but depends on political decision solely. Fortunately, the new Defense Minister, Nobuo Kishi, who has shown a keen interest in Japan-Taiwan relations. Repeated verbal accusations and protests are not enough for responding the escalation of China's coercive actions but only the concrete action is required. It is vital that Japan and Taiwan cooperate in dealing with China's unilateral actions. The Self Defense Forces have been conducting joint drills and exercises with the U.S. force to deter China. There may be ways to achieve information sharing between Japan

and Taiwan through the U.S. forces. The U.S. forces and the JSDF can share necessary air picture. Somehow, Japanese politics should have to take action. We, SSRI continues to persuade the necessity of our corporation to politicians and MOD.