

Are Sino-Japanese relations as good as we think?

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Overview

- Why are Sino-Japanese relations in need of better handling?
- The 3 main issues – history, Taiwan, East China Sea
- The failure of Japan`s negotiation strategy
- Outline of a Grand Political Bargain

How good is the relationship?

Everything better after Koizumi?

- President Hu Jintao's visit to Japan in May 2008 resulted in 70 specific areas of cooperation being set up
- November/December 2007: the first Chinese warship visited Japan (June 2008)
- May 2008: Japanese relief team assisted in the rescue operations after the Sichuan earthquake
- June 18, 2008: signing of agreement which provides a framework for negotiating the joint exploitation of oil and gas in disputed areas of the East China Sea

Except...

- More than a year later, the June 2008 agreement has still not led to the start of negotiations for a treaty
- Dumpling incident of January 2008 still not resolved
- The beginning of naval exchanges had been delayed since 1998 (HK refusal + Tianjin PLAN)
- Cancellation of carrying relief goods by the ASDF (US, SK ok) to Sichuan

Fallacy of complacency

- `in the end everything will be sorted because of mutual interests`
- Japanese thinking: China needs Japan (to protect its foreign image as a peacefully developing country, to maintain its export- and FDI-dependent economy, to cope with its environmental problems, to reduce its energy consumption)
- But: patchwork of temporising agreements and understandings on critical issues fails to address fundamental issues, **time on China`s side**

History- The past is always present

- past is reignited not only by government leaders' visits to Yasukuni Shrine!
- Textbooks, insensitive remarks, chemical shells left in China, civil litigation suits in Japan by Chinese victims of Japan's past aggression etc
- Handling of the issue no longer only in the hands of the Chinese gov`t (public opinion, NGOs)

Taiwan

- Most sensitive issue for China
- Japan`s background as a colonial power
- Japan still refuses to say clearly that Taiwan is part of the PRC (`understands and respects China position`)
- Japan and Taiwan stretching the meaning of `unofficial ties`
- PRC`s suspicion about pursuing a Two-China policy because it has sometimes been less forthcoming than even the US on Taiwan (use of the Taiwan issue as leverage?)
- Official ambiguity over the importance of Taiwan to Japan`s security

Territorial issues in the East China Sea: Linkages

- - Senkaku-Diaoyu issue & maritime border delimitation (Southern area)
- - China-Korea & Japan-Korea maritime border delimitation (Northern area)
- - implications for Takejima-Dokto ; Northern Territories (Median Line vs Extended Continental Shelf approach)

Territorial issues in the East China Sea: Pressures

- China's relentless progress in exploring and exploiting oil and gas resources in the ECS
- UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
- Management of fishing resources & sea bottom mineral resources
- There is no status quo!!

Territorial issues in the East China Sea: Japan`s misguided strategy

- Denying the existence of the Senkaku-Diaoyu dispute
- Maritime border: Accepting China`s `winning time` tactics and concluding temporizing agreements (Japan losing technological advantage; sending wrong signals to China)
- Making concessions without asking anything in return (i.e. refraining from exploration until 2004)
- 18 June 2008 (mis-)understanding

Disturbing political background

- Economic & political competition/rivalry and China`s growing leverage
- Growing Japanese economic dependence on China (trade; overcoming economic crisis)
- China better at translating economic power into political, cultural and military power
- The complexities of Japan`s engagement policy (econ. & polit. incentives hedged by military & polit. power balancing)

The pitfalls of Japan`s negotiating strategy

- Emphasis on dialogue - for its own sake? to win time? to bridge the gap between periods of rudderless political leadership? Or
- dialogue with substance, aimed at outcomes which can be presented as win-win situations for both sides?
- Winning time through refusal of dialogue (Senkaku)?
- Ambiguity on Taiwan: long-term costs (leverage may disappear but distrust stays!)
- Time on who`s side?!
- Impact of Japan`s domestic instability, weak political leadership and hardening public opinion on its negotiating position
- Weakening of bureaucracy: now playing it safe, sticking to rigid position and temporizing

The DPJ`s East Asia Community approach – more temporizing?

- Hatoyama: “The problems of increased militarization and territorial disputes cannot be resolved by bilateral negotiations”
- EU as a model how regional integration can defuse territorial disputes (don`t mention Gibraltar...)
- “the fruits of economic synergy will persuade parties to sovereignty-related conflicts to opt for joint development by setting aside their disagreements”
- Problem: time! At what stage of building the EAC can one solve territorial disputes? Will China not consider the resolution of the territorial problem as a prerequisite for any significant stage of the EAC? China`s misunderstanding of CBM!

The framework of Japan`s China policy

- Japan`s comprehensive alliance with the US & US-China rivalry: Is China a threat? Supporting US preponderance in Asia? (Taiwan issue; Japanese leadership in Asia; US support of Japan in ECS; US accommodation of China)
- Japanese economic rehabilitation as a prerequisite to relationship with US & China!
- Learn to punch at least according to its weight!
- Positive Japan-South Korea relationship

Proposals for a better Sino-Japanese relationship

- History: Japan to understand reconciliation as a process, not as several apologies; need to alleviate the various legacies arising from Japan's past
- - China: recognise Japan's apologies and peaceful development since 1945, positive leadership of public opinion
- On Taiwan: Japan to consider the long-term costs of its ambiguity (US changes! GMT rapprochement to PRC!) vs importance of non-use of force in Taiwan area + security of SLOC
- East China Sea: Japan to reconsider its priorities (secure use of ECS!)
- Linking the 3 issues in a Grand Political Bargain!
- China: no gain from `China threat`, regional destabilization, arms race, loss of Japan as a constructive economic partner!