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Recent Developments in the East China Sea

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September 22, 2014

CSIS

CENTER FOR STRATEGIC &
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**Freeman Chair
in China Studies**

CHINESE PATROLS IN JAPANESE WATERS

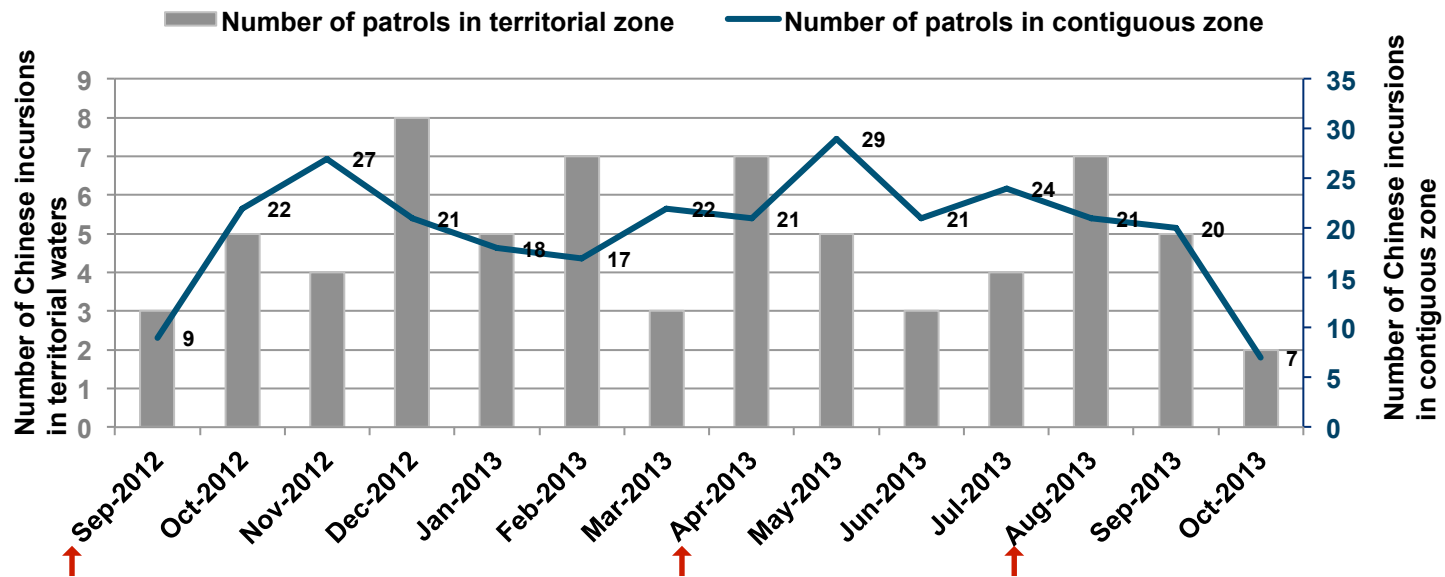
- First Chinese patrol in 12nm territorial waters around Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in December 2008.
- Three subsequent patrols in territorial waters prior to Japanese government purchase of islands in September 2012.
- Chinese patrols in Japanese waters show an uptick during some politically sensitive incidents.
- Chinese incursions in the territorial waters have diminished since October 1, 2013.
- Chinese incursions and Japanese intercepts are mostly predictable and professional. Risk of accident is low unless a third factor is introduced such as fishing boats or activists seeking to land on the islands.

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September 2012 to October 2013

<http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/senkaku/index.html> (Japan CG)

CHINESE PATROLS IN JAPANESE WATERS



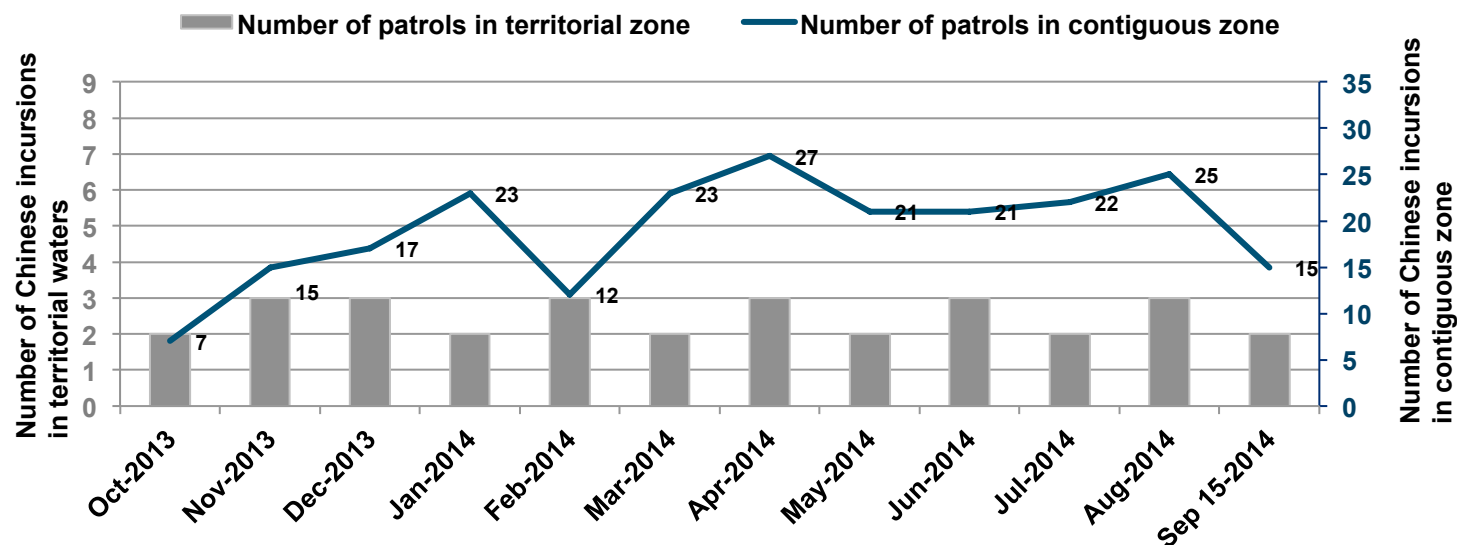
- **Sep 2012:** Japan purchases Senkaku/Diaoyu
- **Dec 2012:** Abe's LDP wins majority in Japan parliament
- **Feb 2013:** Abe accuses CCP of stirring anti-Japanese sentiments to gain legitimacy
- **Apr 2013:** 3 Abe ministers visit Yasukuni; media tries to land on islands; Abe says mulling troops on islands
- **Aug 2013:** 3 Abe ministers visit Yasukuni; Abe sends homage as LDP president

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October 2013 to September 15, 2014

<http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/senkaku/index.html> (Japan CG)

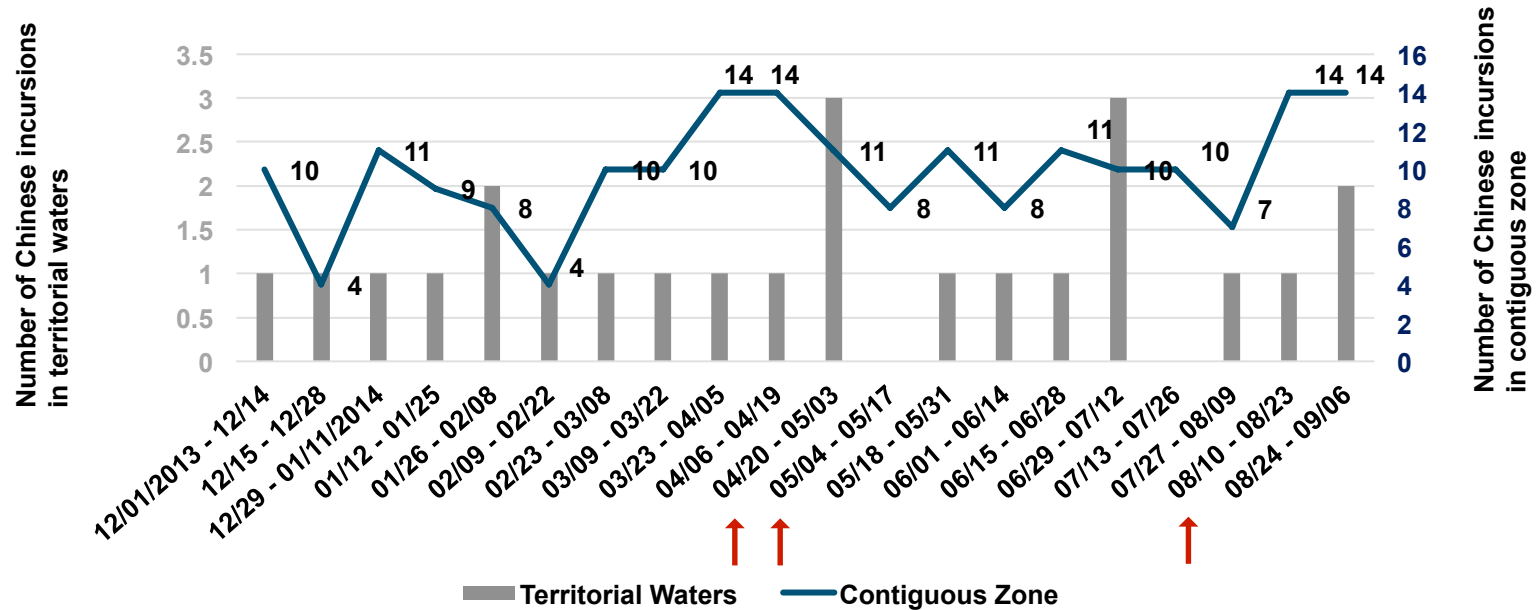
CHINESE PATROLS IN JAPANESE WATERS



- **Dec 2013:** Abe visits Yasukuni shrine
- **Feb 2014:** US and Japan run Iron Fist Exercise, simulating invasion of an island
- **Apr 2014:** Japan MOD announces plans to strengthen garrison of southern islands with anti-ship missiles
- **May 2014:** Abe delivers keynote speech at Shangri-La Dialogue
- **Jul 2014:** Abe administration decides to allow SDF right to collective self defense
- **Aug 2014:** 146 Diet members, including 2 cabinet ministers, visit Yasukuni

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BI-WEEKLY CHINESE PATROLS: DEC 2013 – MID-SEP 14, 2014



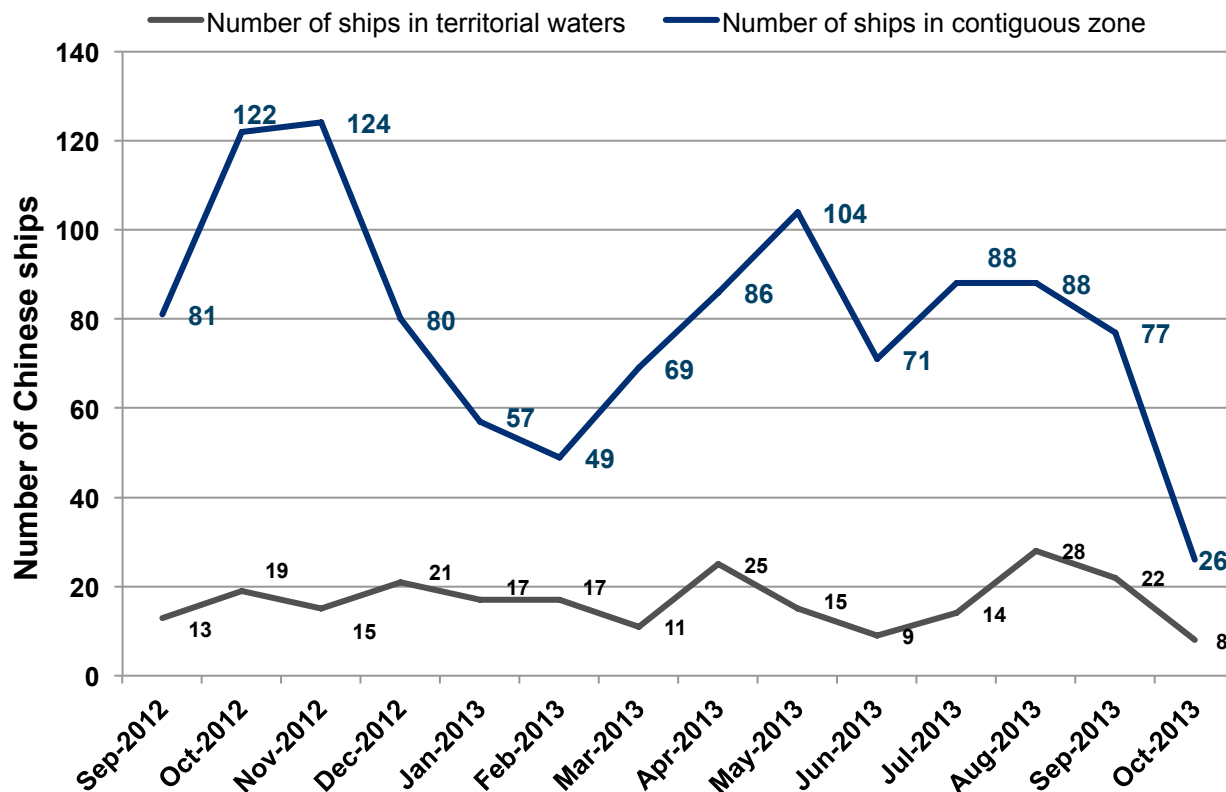
- o Uptick in patrols in territorial waters after Pres. Obama's Japan visit (April 23-25)
- o Significant drop in number of PRC ships in both contiguous zone and territorial waters in May
- o Escalation in PRC presence from mid-August to present (ships and patrols)

Data through September 15, 2014

(<http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/senkaku/index.html>) (Japan CG)

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CHINESE SHIPS IN JAPANESE WATERS SEP 2012 - OCT 2013

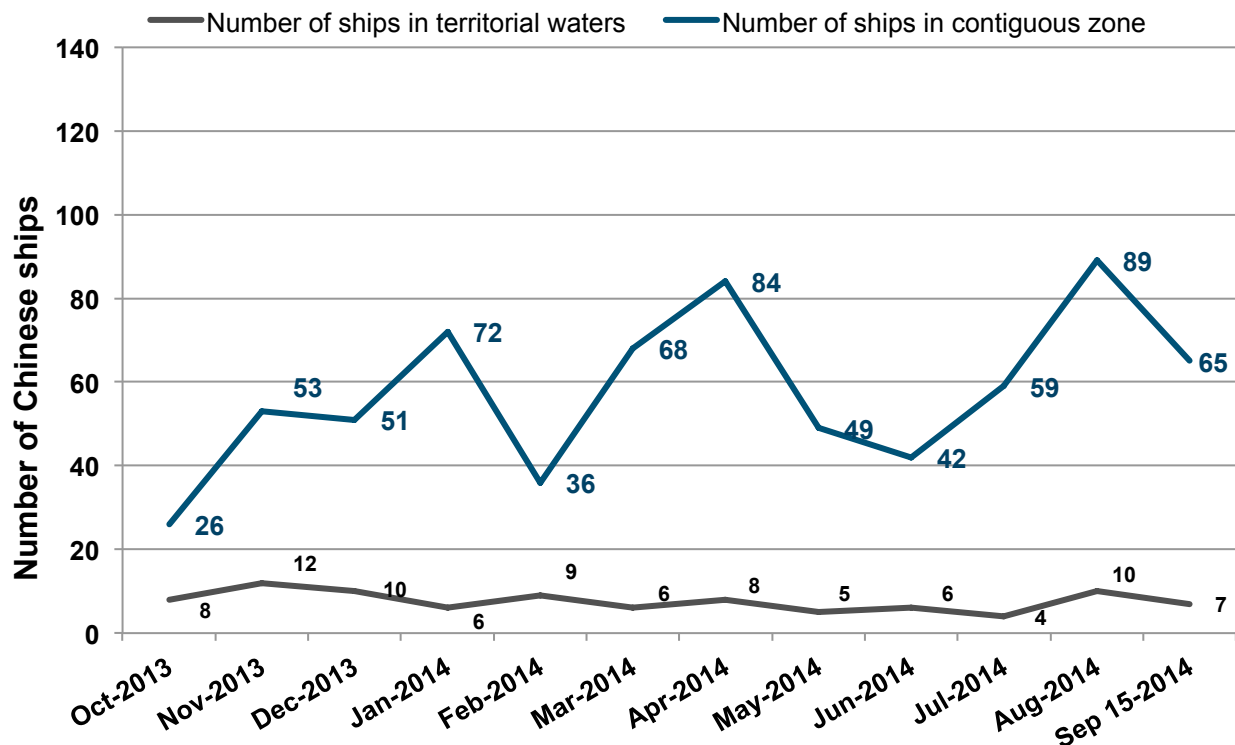


Data through October 2013 from <http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/senkaku/index.html> (Japan CG)

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CHINESE SHIPS IN JAPANESE WATERS

OCT 2013 – MID-SEP 2014



Data through 15 Sep 2014 from <http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/senkaku/index.html> (Japan CG)

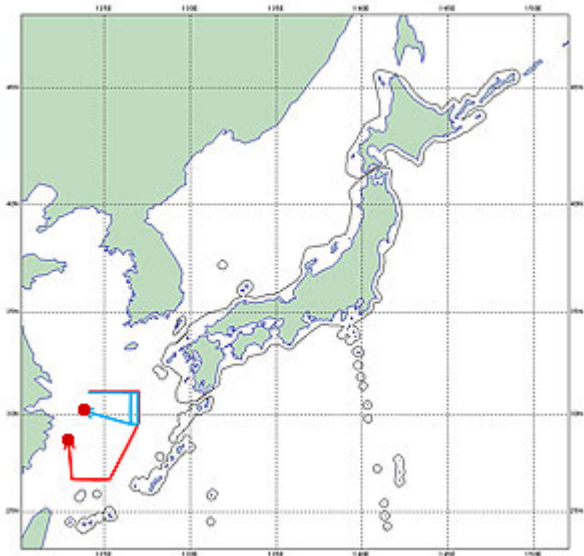
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OVERLAPPING ADIZ IN THE EAST CHINA SEA



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TRENDS IN AIR ACTIVITY AROUND JAPAN



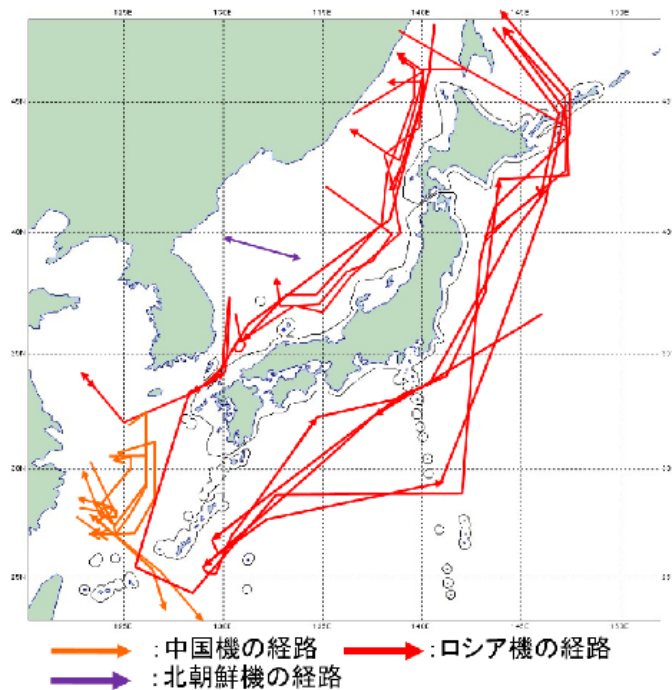
- o PRC sorties rose by 78% in 5 months following declaration of ADIZ in November 2013 (compared to 5 months prior)
- o Evidence that PRC aircraft may be intercepting Japanese aircraft with higher frequency¹
- o Since establishment of ADIZ, PRC intercepts increasingly executed by J-11 fighters²
- o Expanded PRC activity intended in part to demonstrate sovereignty, may signify improved operational ability

Data source http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/ryouku/index.html (Japan MOD)

¹ Ian Forsyth, "The East China Sea ADIZ: Old Policy, New Packaging," China Brief, Jamestown Foundation, Volume 14, Issue 17, September 4, 2014

² Eric Heginbotham, "The Foreign Policy Essay: China's ADIZ in the East China Sea," Lawfare Blog, August 24, 2014

RECENT AIR ACTIVITY AROUND JAPAN



- Chinese aircraft seen only near Senkaku/Diaoyu islands
 - o Chinese aircraft
 - o Russian aircraft
- No records of PRC planes transiting Miyako Strait in latest Japanese MOD report
 - o First seen July 2013 (1 Y-8)
 - o Chinese planes in Miyako Strait last seen March 9, 2014

Flight paths of Chinese and Russian aircraft in Japanese ADIZ

Data from http://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2014/press_pdf/p20140709.pdf

(Japan MOD)

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RECENT AIR ACTIVITY AROUND JAPAN

Country Time period	Russia	China	Taiwan	North Korea	Others	Total
Apr - Jun 2013	31	69	0	9	6	115
Jul - Sep 2013	105	80	1	0	7	193
Oct - Dec 2013	110	138	0	0	7	255
Jan - Mar 2014	113	128	0	0	6	247
Apr - June 2014	235	104	0	0	1	340
Total	594	519	1	9	27	1150

※ Data by country includes estimation

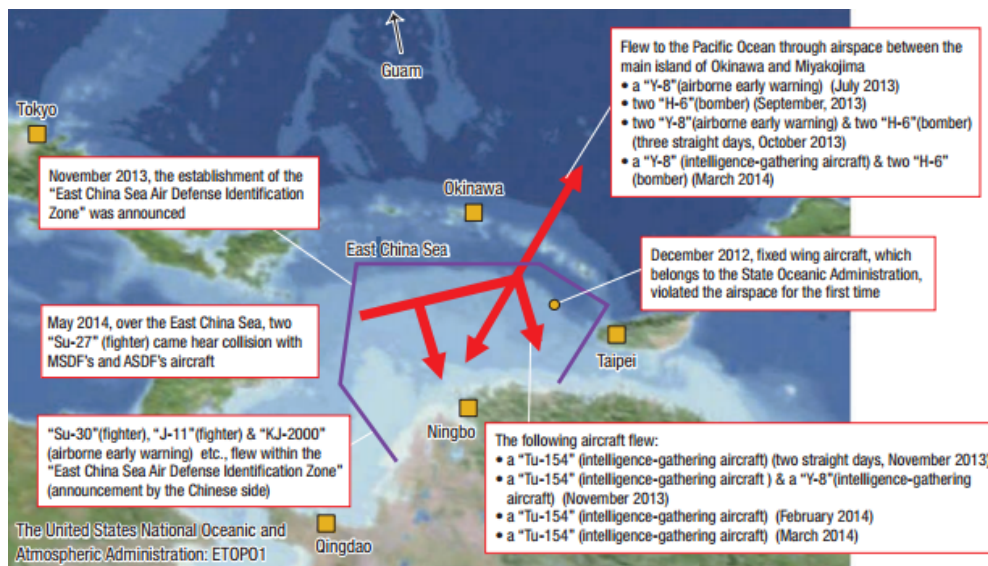
- o Number of Chinese air incursions show an uptick after declaration of the ADIZ

Data from http://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2014/press_pdf/p20140409.pdf

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RECENT AIR ACTIVITY AROUND JAPAN

- April 2013 - March 2014: Japan scrambles jets against Chinese planes 415 times, up 36% from 306 in the previous year



Chinese aircraft in the region identified by JSDF include

- o Y-12 belonging to China's State Oceanic Administration (SOA) spotted on 13 separate instances between December 2012 and March 23, 2014, near the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands (only once violated 12nm zone in Dec 2012)

Map from [Defense of Japan 2014](#)

(Japan MOD)

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RECENT AIR ACTIVITY AROUND JAPAN

- Other aircraft spotted by JSDF:
 - o Formation of 2 H-6 bombers & 2 Y-8 surveillance aircraft seen 3 consecutive days passing through Miyako Strait starting October 27, 2013
 - o 1 Y-8 and 2 H-6 bombers transit Miyako Strait March 9, 2014
 - o Tu-154 intelligence gathering aircraft on 4 different occasions during November 2013
 - o A Y-15 belonging to SOA spotted near Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in January 2014
 - o J-11 fighters intercept Japanese patrol planes in May 2014
 - o Tu-154 intelligence gathering aircraft intercepted in June 2014, Chinese scramble two fighters in response

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CHINA'S DECLARED ACTIVITY IN THE ADIZ

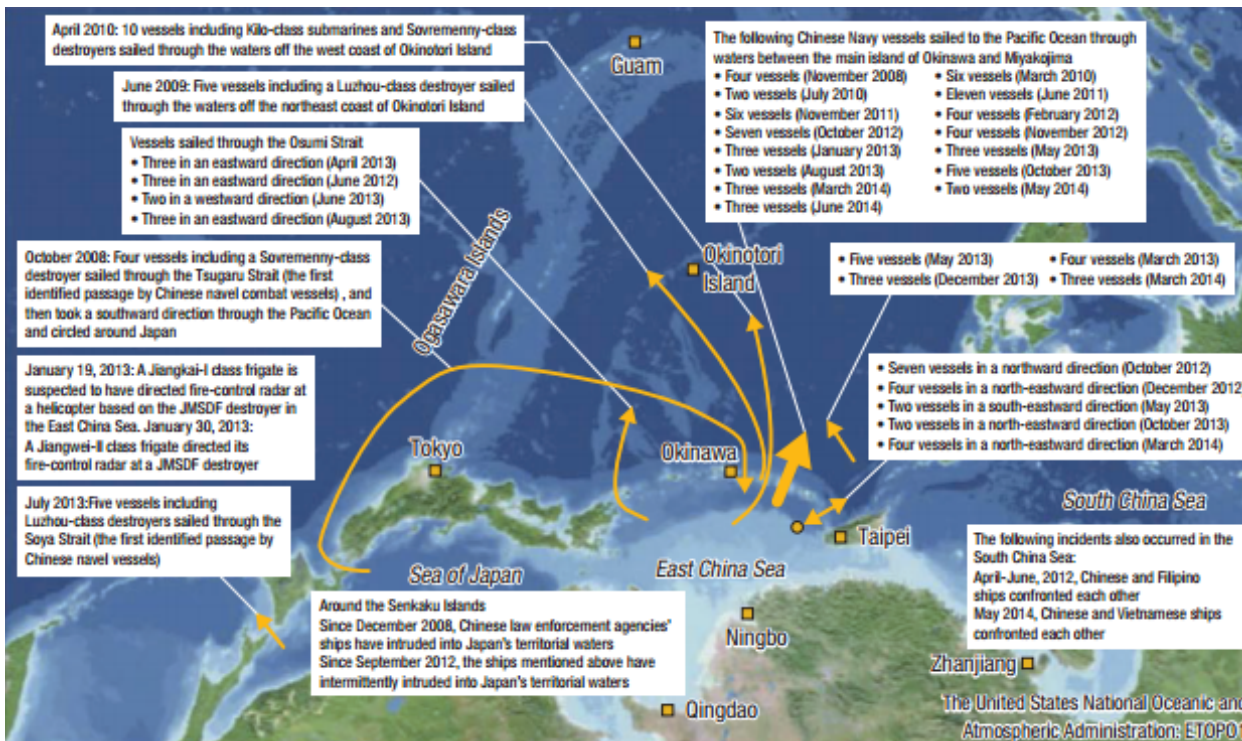
- **December 2013:** China MND releases numbers on its activity after establishment of ADIZ
 - Monitored 800 foreign warplanes between Nov 23, and Dec 22, 2013
 - China sent 51 of its own aircraft on 87 policing or patrolling missions
 - 56 airlines from 23 countries reported 21,475 scheduled flights
- **January 2014:** Information about patrols in ADIZ
 - Claims “routine patrols have beefed up China's effective control over ADIZ”
 - Multiple types of Chinese aircraft used to monitor, identify, track and warn multiple types of foreign military planes entering the ADIZ
- **August 2014:** Chinese MND releases information on intercepts against Chinese aircraft
 - China reports that Japanese F-15s “twice attempted to approach Chinese patrol planes conducting routine patrol of the ADIZ”

Source: <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/index.htm> (PRC MND)

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CHINESE MILITARY ACTIVITY AROUND JAPAN

- o Chinese naval vessels routinely conduct exercises through diverse routes between the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean
- o The Chinese navy and air force conduct frequent training and information gathering activities in the sea/air area surrounding Japan



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Map from [Defense of Japan 2014](#)
(Japan MOD)

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

- o Risk of accident between China and Japan exists in East China Sea, with greatest danger being an air collision.
 - This is against the background of a leader, Xi Jinping, who has a higher tolerance for risk than his predecessors
- o Attention should be paid to deterring “gray zone” incidents and preventing escalation of such incidents if they occur.
- o There is a pressing need for risk avoidance measures between China and Japan, especially hotlines (navy, air force, coast guard), agreement on air intercept procedures and other rules of the road.
- o China believes it has changed the status quo in its favour in the East China Sea
 - Pressure and coercion have enabled China to make progress and it sees no reason to make concessions
 - Chinese believe the shifting balance of power and internal factors in Japan will lead Tokyo accommodate to China
- o Can the US change China’s calculus and strategy?
 - Reputational cost, strengthen US-Japan alliance, counter-balancing, TPP

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