



China's Activities in East China Sea, Pacific Ocean, and Sea of Japan

March 2021
Japan Ministry of Defense

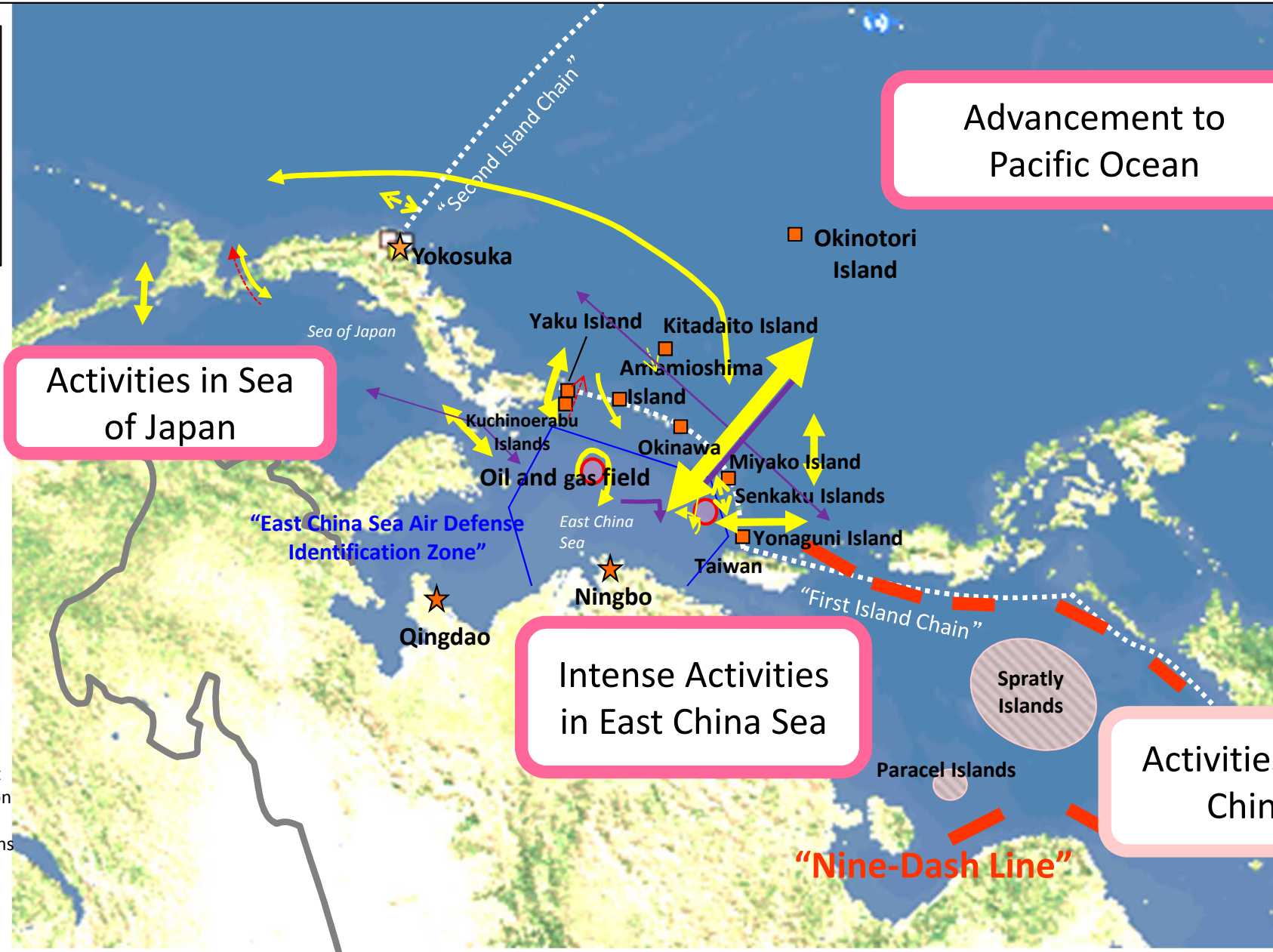
Summary: PLA Activities around Japan

- China has broadly and rapidly reinforced its forces, based on **high-level increase of its national defense budget**
- It is believed that China aims to build up **capabilities to conduct operations in more distant waters and airspace**
- China has **rapidly expanded maritime activities both in qualitative and quantitative ways**

Examples	
Aircraft	→
Vessels	→
Passage through territorial waters	→

*Broken lines represent activities of information gathering ships

Descriptions and locations of each event are solely for illustration purpose, based on media reports. Locations of Island Chains are based on U.S. DoD Reports.



Advancement to Pacific Ocean

Activities in Sea of Japan

Intense Activities in East China Sea

Activities in South China Sea

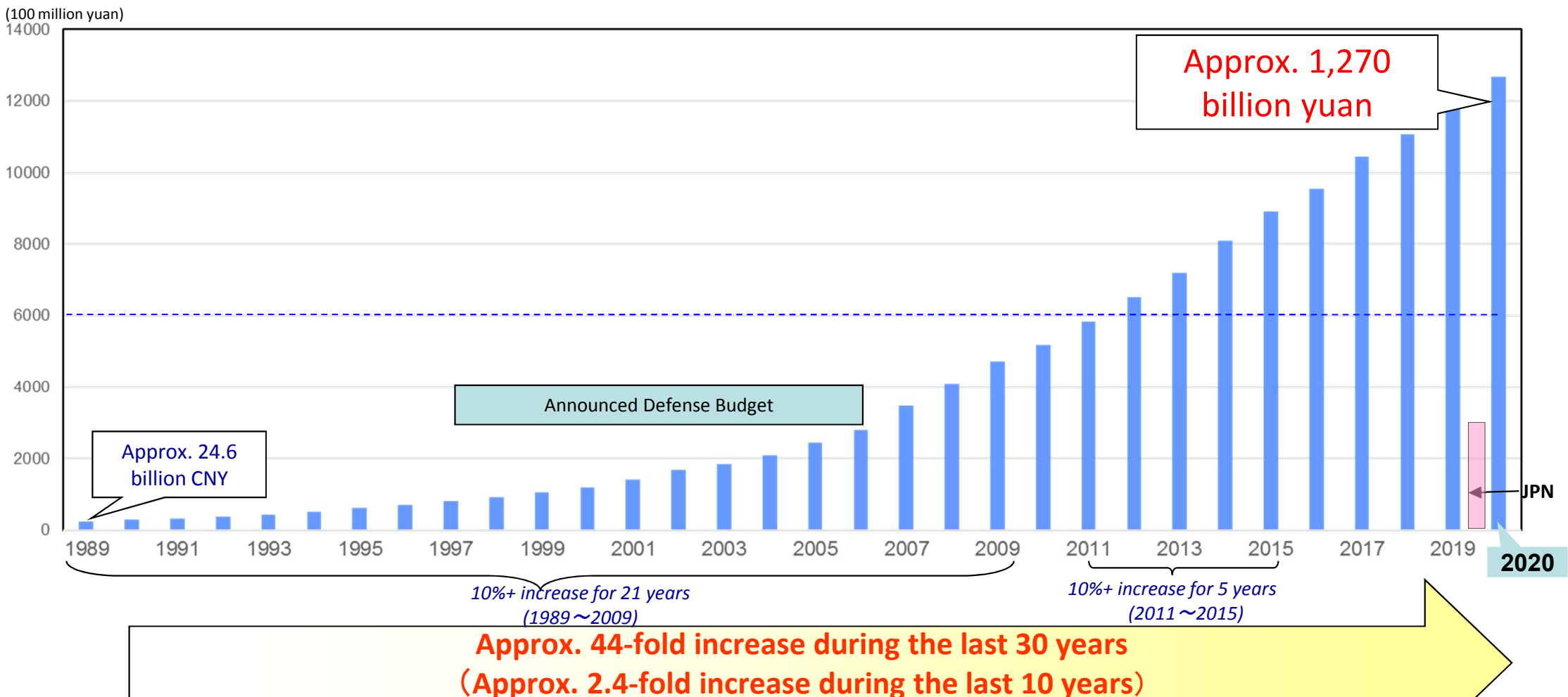
“Nine-Dash Line”

Increase of National Defense Budget

China's Defense Budget

China's Announced Defense budget

- Some think that China's announced defense budget is a mere part of China's real defense-related expenditures and does not include major categories such as R&D expenses and foreign procurement
- It is pointed out that actual military-related spending is higher than stated in the official budget, estimated at more than \$200 billion in 2019 (U.S. DoD "China Military Power Report 2020").



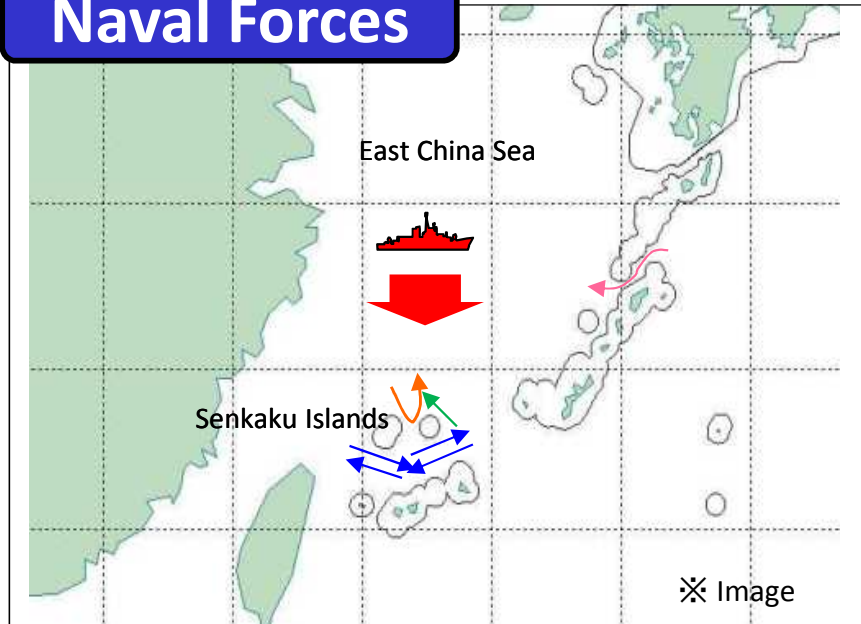
※ There are limits to the comparisons of national defense budgets which have simply been converted into foreign currency when the different elements are taken into consideration, such as each country's price levels. However, to simplify the comparison, this graph dares to represent the Japan's defense-related expenditures and China's announced defense budget that has been converted into yen using the exchange rate published by the Ministry of Finance Japan (MOFJ) each fiscal year (FY).

**East China Sea,
West Pacific Ocean and
Sea of Japan**

China's Activities in East China Sea

Source(including picture):Joint Staff

Naval Forces

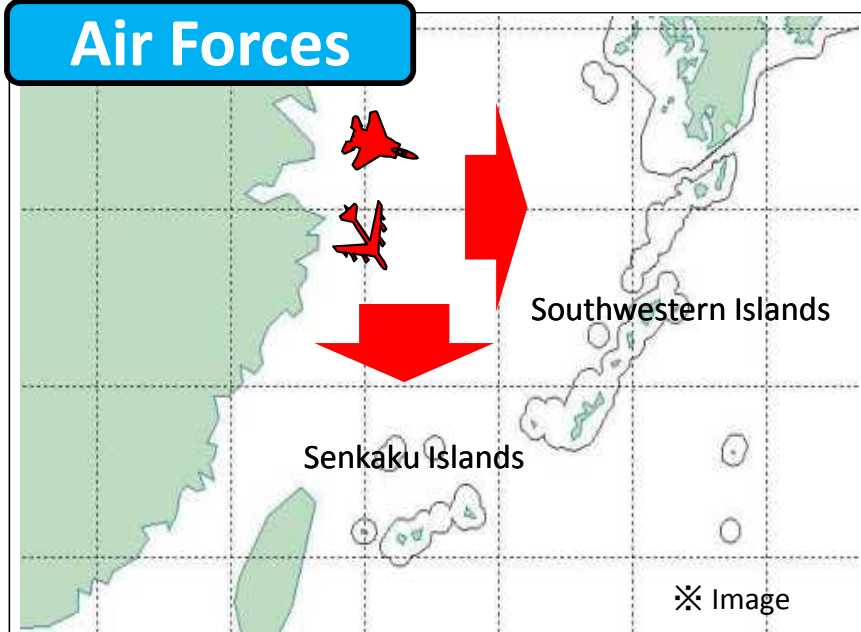


- China's naval vessels have recently tended to **expand the area of their regular activities to the south**
- They are **continuously operating in the area near Japan's Senkaku Islands**
- In June 2016, a **frigate of the PLAN entered Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands** (This was the first time when a PLAN combatant vessel entered Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkakus) (**Shown as an orange arrow in the figure**)
- PLAN intelligence gathering vessels (AGIs) have also been found conducting activities near the Senkaku Islands multiple times (**Shown as blue arrows in the figure**)
- In January 2018, a Chinese **submerged submarine entered the Japanese contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands.** (This was the first time for MOD to confirm and announce it.) On the same day, a frigate of the PLAN entered the Japanese contiguous zone (**Shown as a green arrow in the figure**)
- In June 2020, a submarine, which is assumed to be affiliated with China, navigated underwater within Japan's contiguous zone (**Shown as a pink arrow in the figure**)

The PLAN submarine that entered Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands



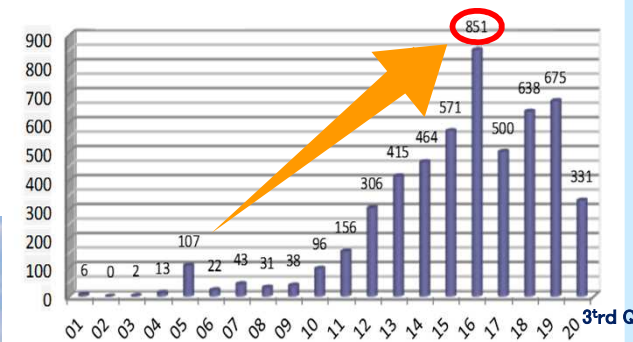
Air Forces



- **The number of scrambles** by the ASDF against Chinese aircraft **remains big** ⇒ Hitting the biggest in FY 2016
- **The scope of activities of PLA aircraft in the East China Sea has tended to expand eastward and southward**
- The scope of activities of PLA aircraft near the Senkaku Islands has tended to expand southward
 - In June 2016, PLA aircraft flew southward closer to the Senkaku Islands



Examples of military aircraft confirmed near Japan



The number of Japan's press releases of Scrambles against Chinese Aircraft (by FY)

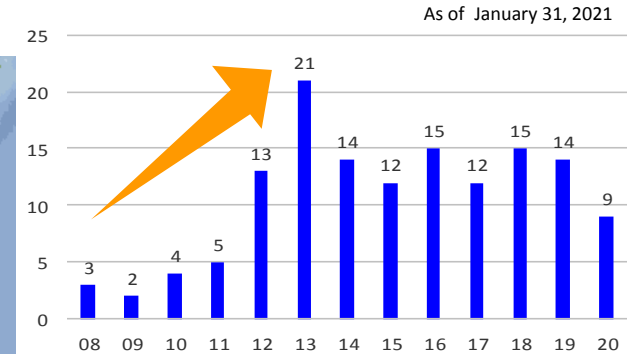
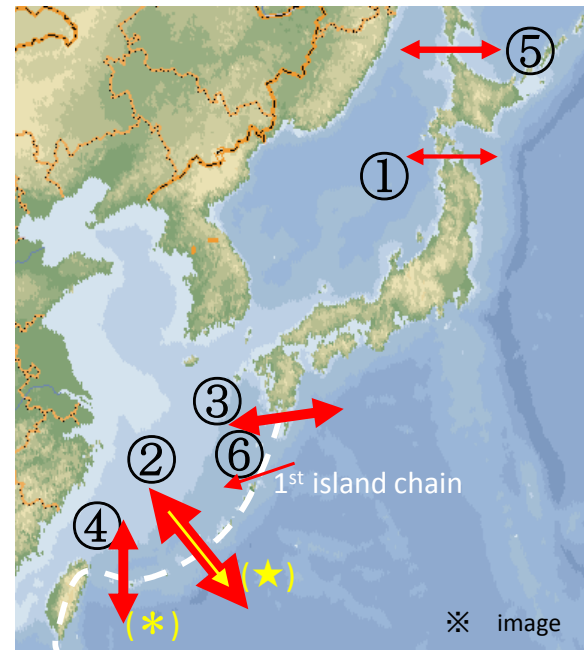
Naval Forces

【Enhancing deployment capabilities to the open ocean】

- Advancement of Chinese naval fleets to the Pacific Ocean with high frequency
- More diverse routes
 - ①The Tsugaru Strait, ②Waters between the Okinawa Main Island and Miyako Island, ③The Osumi Starit, ④Waters between Yonaguni Island and Nakanokami Island, ⑤The Soya Strait, ⑥Waters between Amamioshima Island and Yokoatejima Island

【Enhancing operation capabilities on the open ocean】

- Three naval fleets' joint exercise in the PO
- In December 2016, April 2018, June 2019 and April 2020, the aircraft carrier "Liaoning" advanced to the PO (★)
- In April 2018 and April 2020, flights by probable carrier-borne fighters from CV "Liaoning" were spotted for the first time (＊)



The number of Japan's press releases that surface combatants operate in WPO passing through Nansei Islands (Year)



Chinese aircraft carrier "Liaoning" transiting the sea area between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island

Air Forces

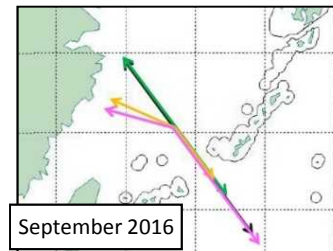
【Flights to/from the Pacific Ocean through the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island】

- More diverse types of aircraft
 - Y-8 AEW, H-6 bombers, Y-8 SIGINT, Y-9 SIGINT, Tu-154 SIGINT, Su-30 fighter, Y-8 EW
- More diverse routes

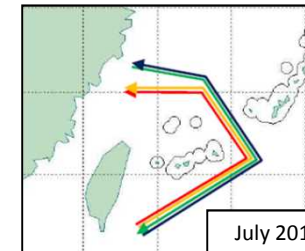
【SDF's Response】

- SDF aircraft conduct scrambles in accordance with international law and the SDF Law

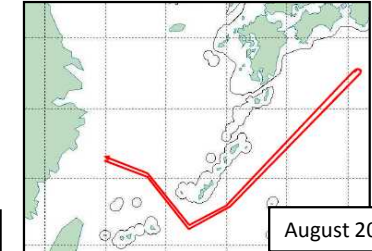
Four H-6 bombers (Pink), one Y-8 SIGINT (Green), one Tu-154 SIGINT (Black), two fighters[est.] (Yellow)



Four + four H-6 bombers (Green & Blue), one Y-8 SIGINT (Yellow), one Y-8 EW (Red)



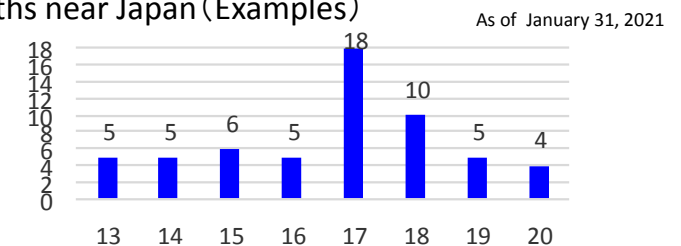
Six H-6 bombers (Red)



Flight paths near Japan (Examples)



A H-6 bomber that advanced to the sea near the Kii Peninsula



The number of Japan's press releases on China's military aircraft's flights through the strait between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island (Year)

China's Advancement into Sea of Japan

Source(including picture):Joint Staff

Possible that China's activities by naval and air forces in the Sea of Japan will become more active hereafter

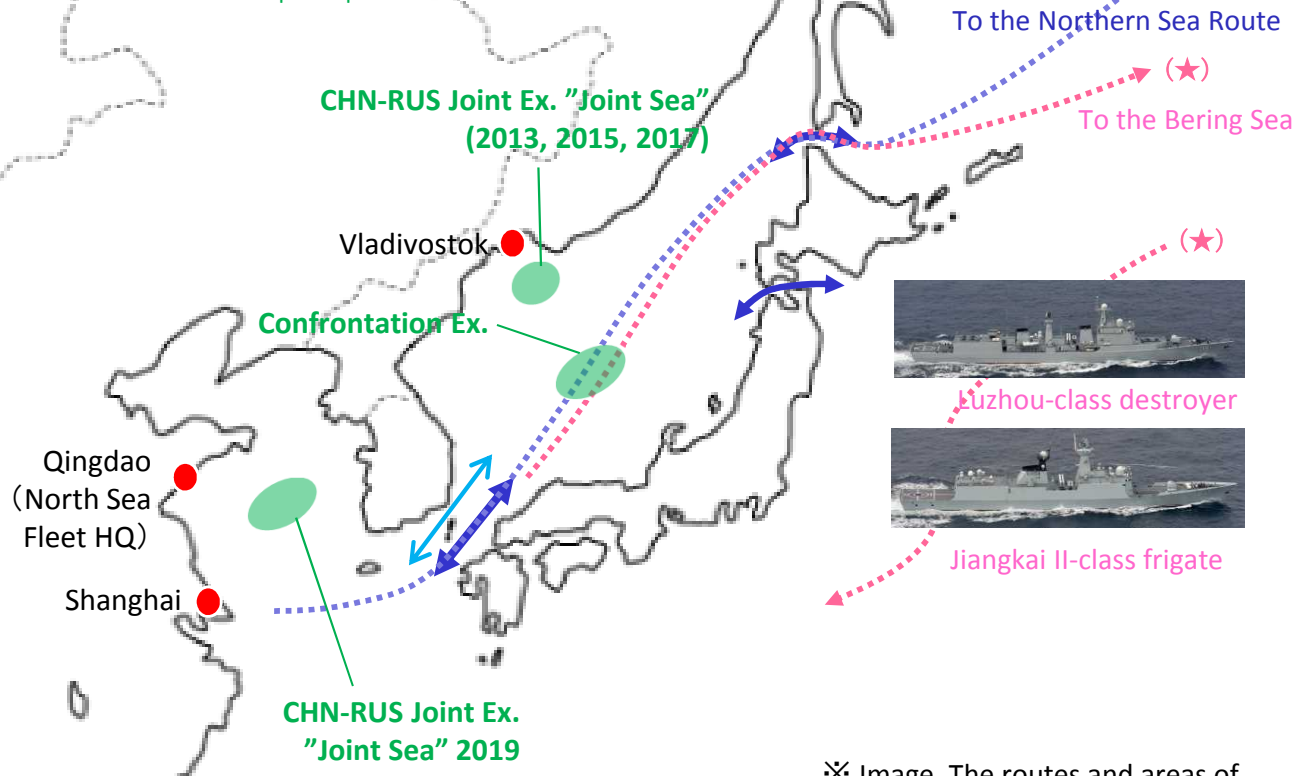
The Arctic expeditions using, Chinese icebreaker, "Xuelong"(1999-)

Fuchi class replenishment oiler

Dalao class Submarine rescue ship



Some of Chinese vessels that sailed through Tsushima Strait northward in order to participate in "Joint Sea 2017"



※ Image. The routes and areas of exercises are estimates

Naval Forces

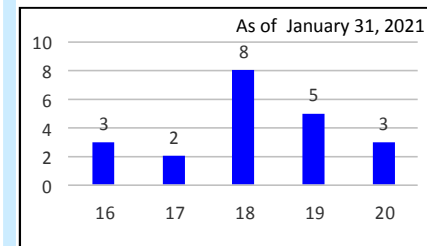
- "Confrontation exercise" ※ by the Chinese naval fleet was announced for the first time in August 2016. Naval vessels and aircraft conducted joint training in the same area in January 2017 as well.
 - ※ Practical exercises in the form of confrontation
- China and Russia held the naval joint exercise "Joint Sea" in the Sea of Japan off the coast of Vladivostok in 2013, 2015, and 2017.
 - ※ After "Joint Sea 2015", Naval vessels passed through the Soya Strait to the Bering Sea (★)

Air forces

- In January 2016, Chinese aircraft for the first time operated in the Sea of Japan.
- China and Russia made a bombers' long range joint flight (July. 2019: The East China Sea ~ Sea of Japan. Dec. 2020: The East China Sea ~ Sea of Japan ~ the Pacific Ocean)

Aircraft confirmed in Tsushima Strait

Chinese H-6 (upper)
Russian Tu-95 (lower)



The number of Japan's press releases that PLA aircraft fly through Tsushima Strait (/Year)

