

East China Sea Conflict: Pentagon Chief Has A Lot Of Explaining To Do

By [Stop NATO](#)

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The dispute over the Diaoyu Islands is essentially a US-made legacy of World War II.

The US' intentional blindness to the illegal nature of Japan's claims to the islands and the ambiguity they are intentionally trying to bring into the dispute are hypocritical. And including the territory into the US-Japan security treaty violates a core Chinese national interest.

“US behaving badly”

The visiting US Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta is expected to appeal for Chinese restraint in handling the escalating tension with Japan over the disputed Diaoyu Islands during his meeting with his Chinese counterpart, General Liang Guanglie.

While in Tokyo, Panetta made a similar appeal to Japan on Monday, expressing the hope that the dispute be resolved in a peaceful manner.

Clearly, defusing the dangerous situation is in the United States' best interest - his country has nothing to gain from being dragged into an open military showdown with China by a bellicose Japan.

Yet leaving aside the fact that US military strategy is increasingly targeted at China as a potential enemy, the US has been playing a very negative role in the current turmoil in the East and South China seas.

The world constantly hears US appeals for restraint and negotiations over territorial disputes and we continually hear Washington proclaim that it is taking no sides in such disputes, yet behind the scenes it is clearly a different matter.

On his way to Japan, Panetta reiterated that his country is not taking sides in the dispute over the Diaoyu Islands. But, then on Monday, after his meeting with Koichiro Gamba, the Japanese foreign minister, Gamba told the press that the Diaoyu Islands are covered by the security treaty between Japan and the US.

Panetta should clarify why, if the US does not have a position in the dispute, his country seems to have extended coverage of the security treaty, meant to protect Japanese territory, to include the Diaoyu Islands, which are legally Chinese territory as the US well knows.

This is important particularly because the dispute over the Diaoyu Islands is essentially a

US-made legacy of World War II.

The US' intentional blindness to the illegal nature of Japan's claims to the islands and the ambiguity they are intentionally trying to bring into the dispute are hypocritical. And including the territory into the US-Japan security treaty violates a core Chinese national interest.

Panetta's visit is supposed to be part of the US' alleged commitment to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. But he is going to have a lot of explaining to do to convince China of this and successfully achieve his stated goal of deepening the military-to-military relations between the US and China.

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