

# Rising China-US Tensions: Heading Towards Military Confrontation?

By [Stop NATO](#)

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*China's priority is to maintain our attitude toward the Diaoyu Islands. We have to help other sides properly understand us. There should be no ambiguity when it comes to China's willingness to counterattack in the event of a military provocation. As long as there is understanding, the words of the US won't seem so important.*

Outgoing Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Friday that the US has no position on the Diaoyu Islands dispute. She did however, claim that the islands are under the administrative jurisdiction of Japan and that the US opposes any unilateral moves to encroach on Japan's area of jurisdiction. This demonstrates that the US has admitted its bias in the Diaoyu Islands dispute.

This doesn't come as a surprise. If further escalation of the confrontation between China and Japan occurs, such signs of bias may also be demonstrated by the US military.

If the situation leads to conflict, US forces in Japan will take further actions to exert pressure on China. China should be psychologically prepared for this.

Some elements of the Diaoyu Islands disputes and the South China Sea disputes will be partly transformed into a competition between China and the US. If we regard Clinton's remarks as a significant change, the whole diplomatic strategy of our country should be revised and the importance of our national rejuvenation needs to be reexamined.

Does this mean that military conflict between China and the US will be triggered by a conflict such as the Diaoyu Islands dispute? Perhaps not.

It will depend on whether the US has the determination to contain China's rise via military means. We have not yet seen such determination.

With China's rise, the risks faced by the US in any military action will increase. Obviously, the US does not want to face such risks if they can be avoided.

It also depends on whether China moves to directly threaten core US interests. If China expands its forces and tries to drive the US out of East Asia, the US will resort to military action despite the risks. However, China has no such intention.

The Diaoyu Islands lie within the range of our national defense forces' effective zone of deterrence, so US tactical intervention has no certainty of success. China has enough military and non-military means to retaliate against US actions.

Therefore, China should treat subtle changes in US statements rationally. There's no need to exaggerate words that suit China's aims, nor be afraid of US bias. US influence is important, but not so powerful that China cannot deal with it.

There is going to be a very complex period involving games between China, the US and Japan. These three sides will test each other's bottom line as well as enjoy the benefits brought about by cooperation. They do not intend to go to war, but they are all preparing for an emergency. Despite the many tactical uncertainties, it is not the time for powers in the Western Pacific to engage in a strategic collision. The Diaoyu Islands are not big enough to be the trigger for this.

China's priority is to maintain our attitude toward the Diaoyu Islands. We have to help other sides properly understand us. There should have no ambiguity when it comes to China's willingness to counterattack in the event of a military provocation. As long as there is understanding, the words of the US won't seem so important.

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