

The Australian National University

MA (East Asian Studies) Sub-Thesis

The Senkaku Island's Dispute: The Effect of Public Sentiment and the Media on Foreign Policy after the 1996 Lighthouse Incident.

**Shane Francis Fairlie
July 1999**

I certify that this thesis is my own work and that all sources have been acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Fairlie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shane Francis Fairlie

I would like to thank the following people for the support and assistance they have given me over the past twelve months: Dr Greg Austin as my extremely understanding supervisor and 'comrade' at the ANU, the staff and students at John XXIII College for their patience, the Asian Studies Faculty and the International Relations Department at the ANU, my 'guide' Ms Wynne Russell, my family and friends, and the Combined Universities Athletics Club.

Abstract

The impact of the media and public sentiment on foreign policy has been the focus of much discussion in both academic and political circles since coverage of the Vietnam War revealed to the world the pervasive nature of the media. This impact is greatly affected by the political order of each country and the domestic structures that determine the function of the media and the ways in which public sentiment is expressed in each society. This thesis examines the effect of public sentiment and the media on foreign policy in China and Japan in the case of the Senkaku Islands dispute. This will be conducted through analysis of vernacular and English language press coverage of the dispute in China, Japan and Hong Kong at the height of recent tensions from 1996-1998.

Examination of China and Japan provide insight into the differences between an authoritarian regime and a liberal democratic society and how the respective governments seek to control, manipulate and respond to the media and the public. Although the fundamental 'Senkaku policy' of each government was not 'changed' by media or public influence, shifts in policy were obvious. Although media theory often assumes public and media impact to be greater in a democratic society such as Japan, this research discovered that in the case of the Senkaku dispute, the Chinese government despite efforts to control opinion, were most affected by the public as the government acted to seek resolution and defuse anti-Japanese sentiment on both the Mainland and in Hong Kong that threatened the stability of important bilateral relations with Japan.

Map 1



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Introduction

This thesis will examine the effect of the media and public sentiment on foreign policy in the case of the Senkaku Islands dispute in China and Japan. This paper will analyse media coverage since the July 1996 'Lighthouse Incident'. The building of a lighthouse on one of the disputed islands by Japanese ultranationalists created a 'lightning rod effect' and suddenly reignited anti-Japanese sentiment amongst the Chinese. The act triggered protests in Hong Kong, Taiwan and on the Mainland, with the Chinese people claiming that Japanese aggressors had again 'violated' their sovereign rights. The protests climaxed in September 1996 with the drowning of a Hong Kong activist in the waters off the islands and the illegal landing on Japanese territory of Chinese protestors in October 1996.

After 33 years of difficult relations, in 1978, Japan and China finally signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship, marking the formal end of a state of war between Japan and the Chinese government on the Mainland that Japan had only recognised since 1972. The treaty superseded a similar one signed by Japan and the Republic of China on Taiwan in 1952. This effectively ended poor relations that had been in place since the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, Northern China in 1931. The treaty has been precarious but both parties, realising the mutual benefit in healthy relations, have worked to preserve it.

However, this fragile relationship was shaken by the lighthouse construction as the controversy surrounding the disputed islands flared once again. The small group of uninhabited islands, referred to as the Senkaku Islands in Japan and the Diaoyu Islands in China, are situated between Taiwan and Okinawa in the East China Sea. Although the Japanese have had possession since the late 19th century, the announcement of potential oil and gas deposits beneath the islands in the late 1960s has created much protest and tension as the islands are now of great value to those able to acquire sovereignty.

This paper will be divided into three chapters. Chapter One investigates the role of the media and public sentiment in society and the effect they have on government policy. It also reviews the internal and external factors that can have an impact on these relations.

Chapter One will also provide a general introduction into the political order and the media in China and Japan. Chapter Two and Three will be presented in a similar thematic format as Japan and China will be discussed, with Hong Kong included as part of the China chapter. Hong Kong is part of China, but still remains a liberal society with a media and public able to express opinion with much greater freedom than the Chinese on the Mainland. Chapters Two and Three examine in greater depth the political order, the media in society, public sentiment and selected newspaper coverage of the dispute and the effect of this on Senkaku policy in China and Japan. Newspapers are to be used as they are the most accessible and practical media outlet. Chinese and Japanese language newspapers are the primary source along with the leading English language newspaper in each place as it reveals some differences to vernacular press content.

Japanese and Chinese media coverage of the dispute and public opinion in each community has been quite different. Both governments have maintained basic foreign policy stances regarding the islands in the face of both domestic and international pressure to ease the situation and avoid heightened tensions. Due to the differing nature of democratic Japan and authoritarian China, the nature of this pressure has varied as factors influencing 'Senkaku policy' are affected by the different political orders of each country.

Although extensive research has been conducted on the influence of the media and public sentiment on foreign policy in Western society, research about Asian countries has been quite limited. As an East Asian Studies degree this paper is not based on elaborate political science methodology but it does hope to offer some insight into the nature of the media-state-public sentiment relationship in China and Japan through a disciplined narrative account of the issues.

1

Public Sentiment, The Media and Foreign Policy**Introduction**

This chapter examines the role of the media and public sentiment in society and its influence on foreign policy. Despite wide public recognition of the media's pervasive presence in modern society, its exact level of influence is difficult to ascertain. According to Wolfsfeld, it is 'impossible to assess precisely the degree of media influence in a given political conflict'. This is primarily due to the difficulty in 'isolating the news media from the other factors' that can have an effect.¹

The media in many Asian countries, in contrast to their western counterparts, has been studied very little. Hence, much of the literature mentioned here is from Western sources. This chapter provides the reader with some basic insight into the role of the media and its function in China and Japan. It also examines Hong Kong as a liberal enclave in the People's Republic of China. Although without independent policy on foreign affairs and defence matters, Hong Kong is still basically an autonomous region that acts as a window into Chinese sentiment that cannot be openly expressed on the Mainland but can be expressed by the public and the press in Hong Kong. This chapter also reveals the different impact public sentiment and the media has on domestic and foreign policy and introduces the political order of China and Japan and the different influences on their respective government policies. Although the media's role in a political context varies according to a number of factors, if enough evidence and data is collected then an 'informed assessment about the extent of media influence' is possible.²

¹ G. Wolfsfeld. 'Media influence and political outcomes'. *Media and Political Conflict*. University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.71.

² Ibid., p.73.

Public Sentiment

Public sentiment in society consists of a diversity of opinions and views as different groups actively expressing sentiment, vary in size, influence and intensity. Pressure groups exist along with other organisations such as business groups with a variety of interests ranging from economic and environmental to political and military. These groups reflect the variety of opinions within society and also vary in the impact they can have on the government process of policy formation as organisations with a greater financial base usually are more likely to have an influence on policy than those with less financial support.

Public sentiment can be divided into a number of categories which vary according to the issue. Even within the scope of political sentiment, interest groups and individuals are usually more interested in domestic issues than foreign affairs. In Japan, the introduction of a goods and services tax and political scandals are more likely to arouse public sentiment than Hong Kong activists trying to land on an uninhabited rocky outcrop somewhere near Okinawa. Until strong anti-Japanese protests erupted, the islands were largely ignored by the Japanese media and unheard of by most Japanese.³ In China, policy regarding state-owned enterprises is to be much more closely watched by the many who may lose their jobs than Japanese maritime activity in the East China Sea.

Public sentiment is often controlled by successful government public relations that utilise the media to activate latent public opinion when necessary and ensure favourable support for government policy. This is done in ways that appeal to the majority of people and by addressing the norms and values that 'the public' are assumed to possess. The increase in active interest groups and greater public awareness of political issues, has led to the media and the government regarding public sentiment with caution as 'the public' is comprised of both valued press readers and voting constituents. However,

³ S. Moffett. 'The right and its wrongs'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 21, 1996, p.29.

with regard to foreign policy, public sentiment is usually latent, and much is required to not only stir sentiment but also to stimulate it.

The general latency of public opinion on foreign policy issues causes decision-makers to be mostly concerned about the potential activation of public sentiment.⁴ To stimulate public interest, foreign policy issues must receive major media coverage that is compatible with public frames of reference. In order to stay actively interested in an issue, the public must be able to relate directly to it. An example in the Senkaku dispute is the Chinese and Hong Kong press feeding on existing anti-Japanese sentiment. However, the issue must also be able to warrant intense media coverage for long enough to arouse public sentiment and convince media outlets that the issue continues to be newsworthy. What can cause an intrusion of public sentiment on the formation of foreign policy?

Although most foreign affairs issues are often ignored by the public, major issues such as the threat of military conflict are usually able to arouse the public, especially if there is a direct challenge to the sovereignty of a nation or nationalist pride. Another 'threat' to uninhibited foreign policy formation is the 'lightning rod effect', whereby a particular incident incites a sharp public response and intense media coverage. An example of this 'effect' was the Senkaku 'Lighthouse Incident' in July 1996 that was fuelled by an 'attempted illegal entry' into Japan by Chinese protestors and the death of one.⁵ As stated in *The Japan Times*:

Nothing unites international political thinking in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau like any gesture by Japan that smacks of territorial expansion and revival of 'militarism'.⁶

It is usually only in extreme circumstances that the public may have an impact on foreign policy. However, even then, government public relations personnel are often able to ensure sentiment is mostly favourable and supportive of government policy. The Gulf War in 1991 is an example, as although the war posed no direct threat to US sovereignty, the US government received a majority of domestic support for its foreign

⁴ P.J. Powlick and A.Z. Katz. 'Foreign policy, public opinion and the media'. *Mershon International Studies Review*. Vol. 42, 1998, p.29.

⁵ G. Austin. *The Mass Media and CSCAP*. Discussion paper, 1998, p.8.

⁶ 'Much ado about a bunch of rocks'. *The Japan Times*. September 14, 1996, p.19.

policy particularly from the media who 'supported the Gulf War policy almost without exception'.⁷

The expression of public sentiment over foreign policy issues although less likely than over domestic issues, is still cause for government concern. In the case of this dispute, there has been some fear of an escalation in tension into a military conflict as expressed in *The Economist*, which asked, 'are East Asia's two great rivals, China and Japan, heading for a punch up?'⁸ Respective governments have however managed to give the dispute a relatively low profile despite the issue involving potentially explosive elements and the threat of military action. In instances when latent opinion emerges, governments must adopt strategies to deal with this, such as public relations campaigns to influence the public and mobilise favourable support for policy. Although governments are usually able to manipulate public sentiment on foreign issues, there are circumstances in which sentiment can influence policy.

The Role of the Media in Society

The role of the media has evolved with the creation of new media, as penetration of these into society has increased, and as social patterns and levels of education for acquiring information have changed. Previously in liberal democratic societies, the press was regarded as impartial and more a source of information than influence. However, attitudes to media influence have changed and the press is deemed by both the public and government as having much potential influence and 'enormous power'. This however is tempered by the media's own market driven agenda as a group of commercial companies that 'must make profits'.⁹ Through a variety of media outlets, the 'market agenda' ensures that society is constantly bombarded in one form or another with news, entertainment and information.

Media in liberal democratic societies, including Japan and Hong Kong, can be influenced by four main groups: First the editorial staff, as journalists strive to provide informative material based on perceived public needs and public interests; second,

⁷ W.A. Dorman In S. Iyengar and R. Reeves (eds). *Do the Media Govern?* Sage publications, London, 1997, p.121.

⁸ 'Troubled waters'. *The Economist*. October 12, 1996, p.29.

newspaper proprietors with individual interests based on economic or political persuasion; third advertisers, because as market pressure intensifies, the need increases for revenue raised by advertisements; and fourth the government, as a powerful institution able to regulate the media and provide financial support and information. Each group depending on the issue usually have different viewpoints and work to influence and manipulate media content in accordance with their own needs and goals.

The media has become a primary source of definitions and images of social reality for individuals, groups and societies, as values and judgements are expressed in the media and mixed closely with entertainment and news.¹⁰ The media has the ability to arouse sentiment and inspire action through the images and news it conveys. According to McQuail, it is the 'mobilising effect on citizen attitudes and behaviours' of the media that plays a very important role.¹¹ Media influence in the political environment means that policy-makers are aware of the press as a 'double-edged sword'. Governments use the media to cultivate loyalty and support for them and their friends and also act hostilely towards designated enemies. However, in order to achieve this, governments must 'maintain the perception that media outlets are objective and print the facts'.¹² The relationship between government policy, public opinion and the media have in many ways interlocked in a society with an increasingly educated population.

The media is a primary source of information regarding foreign affairs to the majority of the public. Exposure to the media has the effect of 'broadening one's horizons and enhancing one's knowledge and interest in foreign affairs'.¹³ Until the latter years of the Vietnam War, the role of the press had been regarded primarily as a conveyor of information and fact. Policy-makers focused little on the need to work with the media which was largely seen to be supportive of the ruling elite, making decisions in the supposed best interests of a mostly apathetic public, which cared little for foreign issues. Media coverage of the Vietnam War was in many ways an important watershed in the evolution of the media worldwide in both democratic and non-democratic societies, and

⁹ K. Goto. 'Freedom of speech, freedom of the press'. *Look Japan*. February 1997, p.10.

¹⁰ D. McQuail. *Mass Communication Theory*. Sage Publications, London, 1987, p.1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.294.

¹² G. Austin. *The Mass Media and CSCAP*. Discussion paper, 1998, p.2.

¹³ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.293.

in its relations with the government because for the first time, the carnage of war was captured on film and broadcast into homes via television.

Media coverage of the Vietnam War revealed to the government and the public the instantaneous nature the media had suddenly developed and many believed that it was media influence and consequently public sentiment that changed American attitudes towards the war. However, studies have shown that it was divided elite consensus, including split opinions amongst policy-makers, that led to intense and controversial media coverage that eventually become oppositional to US involvement and eventually resulted in the media for the first time being recognised as a contributing political factor.¹⁴ As elite opinions continued to differ about the Vietnam War, and body bag numbers continued to rise, public opinion evolved into large-scale protests against the war. Although the power of public sentiment was revealed through mass demonstration, it was the policy-maker's inability to conform to established policy that led to media opposition and activated public opinion in the first place.¹⁵

The media's influence over government policy in democratic societies can be affected by the media's role as 'watchdog' or 'critic', as the press watches over policy-makers and makes relevant criticism.¹⁶ The media is also capable of playing two other roles in society; spectator (neutral), and servant of the state (generating support for the regime).¹⁷ However, because competitive commercial interests are also a factor in determining coverage in democratic societies, the 'watchdog' role of the press may be undermined by market pressure, which often dictates more coverage of domestic issues than foreign affairs. These restrictions however, also limit public access to foreign policy and hence, decrease the likelihood of opinion activation and a public intrusion on foreign policy. Despite this, the press continues to try to maintain the image of a highly independent organisation providing its readership with a balanced range of news.

¹⁴ D. Davis. 'Covering foreign affairs'. *The Press and American Politics*. Longman, New York, 1992, p.217.

¹⁵ P.J. Powlick and A.Z. Katz. 'Foreign policy, public opinion and the media'. *Mershon International Studies Review*. Vol. 42, 1998, p.29.

¹⁶ D. Davis. 'Covering public policy'. *The Press and American Politics*. Longman, New York, 1992, p.197.

¹⁷ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.5.

Commercial consideration is such that a criterion exists for determining which stories feature in print and which are ignored. In an increasingly market-oriented Japan and Hong Kong, the need to sell newspapers and continue to attract needed revenue from advertisers often contributes to content consideration. Most newspapers have a limited international news sections and priorities for coverage are based on the following, sensation value; sex (according to the public prominence of the people involved); violence (number dead or prominence of the people involved); crime (according to the scale); and politics (according to the shock value of the story). According to Austin, this is followed by 'national security or foreign policy, unless there is a sex, violence or crime aspect to the story' which elevates the value of the article. Consequently, the editorial policies of all mass media outlets do not allow the audience to get any sort of comprehensive picture of foreign policy or security issues.¹⁸

The Political Order

The nature of the relationship between sentiment, media and government policy depends greatly on the various domestic political structures which determine the degree of impact public opinion has on policy.¹⁹ The political order of China, Japan and Hong Kong determine the function of their respective media outlets and permissible expression of public opinion. As the most democratic country in Asia, Japan has a thriving media, influenced by both the market and the government. Although generally regarded as a conservative nation in terms of the role of the media, the Japanese public have the ability to freely express sentiment and Japan maintains a liberal society with freedom of speech encouraged although conservative norms and cultural restrictions often cause a passive response to many events.

As one of the last countries ruled by a communist party, China still remains authoritarian in the control it exercises over its people. Although since 1978, the country has undergone a dramatic liberalisation process, it still remains politically less transparent than liberal democratic societies, with efforts to keep the media and public expression under considerable restraint. The presence of public sentiment in China is

¹⁸ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁹ P.J. Powlick and A.Z. Katz. 'Foreign policy, public opinion and the media'. *Mershon International Studies Review*. Vol. 42, 1998, p.53.

less obvious and unable to be expressed to the same extent as in other places, and although the Chinese people are increasingly able to express their views, the government is still wary of opinion that criticises or threatens the regime. Although centrally controlled by Beijing and without independent defence or foreign policies, Hong Kong is a relatively autonomous society where freedom of the press and freedom of speech still exist despite a return to communist China in 1997.

Government Policy and Media Influence

The level of influence the press has on foreign policy is unclear. Despite this and the media changes that have taken place, including technological advances and more emphasis on the importance of the market, the media is acknowledged as a prominent entity in society. According to Deese, the most important recent development in the world of foreign policy is that the 'news media cannot be ignored'.²⁰ The state-media relationship is one in which both parties are in many ways, dependent on the other. The nature of this relationship is also affected by other factors, but it is usually the issue itself which determines the response from policy-makers and the press with some issues more politically sensitive and of greater public interest than others.

Foreign policy is influenced not just by the media or public sentiment, but also by a number of internal and external factors. These include economic security, prosperity, physical security, ideology and the actions of other states. The actions of other states can create a 'lightning rod effect', as one incident can generate sudden and intense expression of opinion which can then create problems for policy-makers. Intense media coverage can mobilise concentrated sentiment demanding an immediate government response, or sentiment may soon dissipate as the story becomes dated and readers lose interest, causing commercial consideration to take over and the issue is abandoned.

In each country, the influence of media on policy is dependent on four main factors, in accordance with the respective political order: First the type of policy, as domestic policy is usually more likely to stimulate debate than foreign policy; second, the issue itself will determine much of the ensuing coverage and debate, such as the controversy

of a territorial dispute or the possibility of military conflict, which are likely to arouse much interest and concern. Third, the media outlet which determines the intensity of coverage that may vary between visual footage and graphic detail or conservative print, affecting the public's response; and fourth the time frame has to be considered because coinciding events such as related events taking place such as anniversaries may add to the controversy and increase and prolong media coverage, or media coverage may decline as other stories compete for attention and the public and protestors lose interest as the issue subsides.

An example of the importance of the 'time frame' was indicated in Hong Kong, September 1996, as a 'protect the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands' demonstration coincided with the 65th anniversary of the Peking Bridge Incident (which led to the Japanese invasion of China). Such a stirring of anti-Japanese sentiment provided an ideal chance for *baodiao* (protect the Diaoyu Islands) protesters to gain greater support from the local community and gave the Chinese media, such as the *Renminribao*, an opportunity to attack Japan.²¹

If the media is able to have some impact on foreign policy, to what extent is the role of public opinion important? Powlick and Katz declare that regardless of the political order, public attitudes to foreign policy are 'stable, coherent' and 'formed by core values'.²² It is these core values that governments address in order to mobilise and control public opinion and gain support for policies. In the region, the Chinese media is mostly state-controlled and in Japan the press is often dependent on the government for access to printable information as governments attempt to manipulate opinion and as Austin notes, 'the domestic media'.²³ The level of media impact on foreign policy is restricted by market pressures, domestic structures and reliance in many instances, on official sources. As Young and Jesser state, 'effective and efficient government cannot be achieved without some degree of secrecy in areas such as defence and foreign

²⁰ D. Deese (ed.). *The New Politics of American Foreign Policy*. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994, p.185.

²¹ *Renminribao*. 'Zailishijiaoxunjichushangjiaqiangrzhongguanxi'. September 19, 1996, p.6.

²² P.J. Powlick and A.Z. Katz. 'Defining the American public opinion/ foreign policy nexus'. *Mershon International Studies Review*. Vol. 42, 1998, p.30.

²³ G. Austin. *The Mass Media and CSCAP*. Discussion paper, 1998, p.3.

affairs'.²⁴ This ensures that the government is usually able to determine foreign policy unrestricted by sentiment. Did the Senkaku dispute challenge the government's ability to assume policy determination without interference in China and Japan?

The modern media, with its dynamic immediacy and ubiquitous nature, has forced governments to realign themselves with a new order that is reflected in the 'enormous importance political strategists place on media coverage'.²⁵ As Pharr and Krauss note, it is an understanding of the mass media that has become 'an integral part of the analysis of modern politics'.²⁶ An increasingly aware public has also contributed to such changes, with greater public access to a wider range of information sources leading to a higher proportion of the public with opinions on foreign affairs issues. These opinions however, are formulated mostly by the press, which devotes less time to foreign affairs in comparison to domestic policy and stories that appeal to the majority of readers. If the media wants to attract a wider readership then 'entertainment becomes a criteria for action', however this often leads to a decline in media quality, possibly even reputation²⁷ and affects the level of media influence on foreign policy.

Newspapers and the Senkaku Dispute

Media coverage of the Senkaku dispute will be conducted through selected newspapers. Although the electronic media has brought about great change to the role of the media in society, newspapers are still regarded as more credible sources of information and as McQuail suggests, 'in general retain some aura of seriousness and high cultural value' and are expected to present a more real and accurate account of events than the audiovisual media.²⁸ Furthermore, newspapers are a more accessible primary source to be analysed in contrast to the electronic media, which is less open to analysis as stories compete for limited time slots in a relatively short broadcast service. Newspapers offer more in-depth analysis of events because depending on the political persuasion of the paper, articles and editorials may vary slightly in opinion. As indicated in the

²⁴ P. Young and P. Jesser. *The Media and the Military: from the Crimea to Desert Strike*. Macmillan, Australia, 1997, p.10.

²⁵ R. Tiffen. *News and Power*. Allen & Unwin Australia, North Sydney, 1989, p.73.

²⁶ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.5.

²⁷ K. Goto. 'Freedom of speech, freedom of the press'. *Look Japan*. February 1997, p.11.

²⁸ D. McQuail. *Mass Communication Theory*. Sage Publications, London, 1987, p.21.

Renminribao, the liberal and conservative mainstream newspapers in Japan provided readers with differing views on the Japanese government's handling of the dispute.²⁹

Examining the dispute through the media provides insight into some expressions of sentiment by selected groups within Chinese and Japanese society. Since 1978, it has been the actions of protest groups that have created the bulk of the excitement surrounding the dispute and provided the media with entertaining material. It is these protest groups, of ultranationalist origin in Japan and of anti-Japanese sentiment in China that have provided the press with newsworthy copy and, depending on the degree of coverage, has led to newspaper commentary on respective government's Senkaku policies and even expressed public sentiment. Although the media is difficult for one group to control, it presents 'tantalising opportunities' as a resource by which protest groups can 'transform their concerns into part of the agenda of policy-makers'.³⁰ The mass media enables protest movements to gain greater support and thereby attempt to influence the government although without public support, interest groups including the media itself, are unlikely to have much impact on government policy.

The Media in the Region

The diversity of the media in China, Japan and Hong Kong is reflected in the style of reporting, content, internal and external pressures and the role the press is expected to play. What is accepted and understood in democratic Japan as standard media practice, differs greatly from authoritarian China.³¹ In the region, historical and cultural values are often used by the media to stir public sentiment and gain support for the ruling elite. The Chinese media are constantly tapping into anti-Japanese sentiment, with prolonged media focus on Japanese war atrocities and the continual 'failure' by the Japanese government to apologise adequately for their past as the war against Japan has been made into a 'symbol of the genesis of the modern Chinese people'.³²

²⁹ *Renminribao*. 'Rixinglunpingxicunpoihaizhongguanxidaju'. May 8, 1997, p.6.

³⁰ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.219.

³¹ B. Womack (ed.). *Media and the Chinese Public: a survey of the Beijing media audience*. M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1986, p.7.

³² H. Arai. 'Angry at China? Slam Japan'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 3, 1996, p.21.

The Japanese media has long claimed itself to be the 'opposition party' in Japanese politics, which was dominated since 1955 until 1993 by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). In Japan, the press is held in much higher regard by the public than its western counterparts. As Pharr and Krauss reveal, both media, newspapers and television, 'enjoy' far greater credibility and prestige in Japan with a 'vast following', more so than most other countries.³³ However, they also have a unique relationship with the government, sometimes acting as an unofficial opposition party and at other times as a strict medium of government sanctioned information.

The structure and function of the Chinese press is 'fundamentally different from those of the West' and this needs to be understood in order to put the 'Chinese media audience into context'.³⁴ Despite increasing diversity in the Chinese press and much popularity gained by less party-oriented dailies, particularly evening newspapers, the government still attempts to control and carefully monitor public comment on issues that challenge the authority of the ruling elite. In contrast, the Hong Kong press is liberal and competitive and despite being more cautious under Chinese rule, still provides its audience with diverse and varied news sources and opinions. In Hong Kong, although newspapers have been regarded as some of the most liberal in Asia, they are increasingly forced to jeopardise standards and credibility as market and other pressures force them to lower standards and aim for a wider target audience.³⁵ In China, the press although still carefully monitored by the Chinese government in Beijing as 'servant of the state', is currently more independent than ever before with a decentralising of power and a greater emphasis on liberalisation.³⁶

Newspapers can reveal a great diversity of opinion even within mainstream society. The newspapers chosen for this thesis, although all major dailies, differ slightly in reputation and perceived political inclination. The media is also regarded as being able to 'set the public agenda'³⁷ and provide policy challengers the opportunity to achieve political goals. Newspapers reveal the nature of such struggles as in the case of the Senkaku

³³ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.5.

³⁴ B. Womack (ed.). *Media and the Chinese Public: a survey of the Beijing media audience*. M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1986, p.7.

³⁵ F. Ching. 'Learning self-control'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. December 17, 1998, p.24.

³⁶ L. Jin. 'Baxianguhai, meitijizhan'. *Huaxiawenzhai*. March 1999 (internet).

dispute. However, much newspaper opinion is implicit as journalists acknowledge the cultural understanding of readers or do not wish to make open inferences on certain topics.³⁸ For this reason significant differences in editorial policy can often be disguised by newspapers with the use of certain terms or the omission of selected information.

Japan, China and Hong Kong all have popular English language newspapers for foreign audiences both local and abroad. The function of such papers is often to provide 'foreigners' with selected, sanctioned information which usually differs from vernacular press content. This is of particular interest in China, whereby through newspaper analysis, both English language and vernacular, China-watchers have gained a better understanding of the Chinese government as foreign analysts of closed regimes have often used the press as an indicator of government policy and political activity.³⁹ In such analysis, omitted information is usually more revealing than officially published news. This makes the Chinese press useful in commenting on policy shifts and adjustments and with greater media liberalisation in China, can also reveal differing elite opinion on government policy.

The role of the media and the function it serves varies according to the cultural and political structure of a society. McQuail claims that it is because mass communication is so intertwined with the total life of a national society that it is 'strongly influenced by the immediate circumstances of culture and historical events'.⁴⁰ The press everywhere claim to be constantly striving to serve the best interests of the public, including in countries where the media is a mere extension of authoritarian regimes that tolerate no dissent and prohibit freedom of speech. In most democracies, the press, although relatively free to report and distribute, is restricted not only by market competition but also the need to provide news that 'does not confront prejudices'.⁴¹ Media outlets that challenge the beliefs of readers will lose circulation and hence financial revenue. The media in an authoritarian regime is mostly unaffected by market demands due to the financial support received from the government, however the media remains little more

³⁷ G. Wolfsfeld. *Media and Political Conflict*. 'Media influence and political outcomes'. University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.66.

³⁸ T. Van Dijk. *News Analysis: case studies of international and national news in the press*. University of Amsterdam, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, 1988, p.11.

³⁹ W. Mills. 'Treatment of foreign policy issues in the regional Chinese press'. *Asian Survey*. Vol.xxi, no.7, July 1981, p.795.

⁴⁰ D. McQuail. *Mass Communication Theory*. Sage Publications, London, 1987, p.8.

than a 'propaganda mouthpiece' and a 'party organ'.⁴² In this way, Chinese newspapers differ greatly from those in Japan and Hong Kong which although prey to market forces have more independent editorial policy.

Study of the media in Japan, China and Hong Kong provides access not just to 'information' but also some insight into society and government. Media examination of both Japan and China reveal government control to some extent and as Wolsfeld notes, it is this 'level of political control' which also reveals the power authorities have to officially regulate the media which is 'blatant' in non-democratic societies, as the government owns most media outlets and dictates editorial comment.⁴³ In both democratic and autocratic societies it is ultimately the government with the resources to control the media in most circumstances and nullify any effect it may have on policy.

Japan

The Japanese press is not only the most liberal in Asia, but also arguably the most pervasive in the world and regarded as the most influential group in Japanese society.⁴⁴ In a country where over 70 million newspapers are published daily at the world's highest per capita circulation rate of 581 copies to 1000 people, the Japanese press has a prestige unequalled in any other country.⁴⁵ Despite such prestige and a relatively democratic system, the media-politics relationship in Japan is based on a mutual understanding whereby reporters are privy to official sources but restricted by the unofficial nature of the relationship.⁴⁶ These *Kisha Clubs* allow the press access to high level sources and involve a close level of intimacy between the journalist and the source which is 'rarely questioned' and provides reporters with access to a 'great deal of inside information'. However, most of this information remains unexposed and a breach of this trust by way of publishing information without permission will result in the reporter being excluded from 'the club' and 'disconnected from the source'.⁴⁷

⁴¹ G. Austin. *The Mass Media and CSCAP*. Discussion paper, 1998, p.4.

⁴² Ibid., p.4.

⁴³ G. Wolsfeld. *Media and Political Conflict*. 'Media influence and political outcomes'. University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.60.

⁴⁴ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.187.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.301.

⁴⁶ K.van Wolferen. *The Enigma of Japanese Power*. Vintage Books, New York, 1990, p.95.

Despite high circulation, the media in Japan is regarded by international media observers as less influential than in other countries and the press in certain areas of Japanese political life is perceived to be a 'less significant' actor than it is in other industrialised nations'.⁴⁸ The political nature of the Japanese press is such that despite a 'watchdog' reputation, the media is still vulnerable to state intervention and self imposed restriction. In Japan, the majority of political exposure and major scoops are left up to the weekly magazines which will break a story initially, thus, enabling mainstream newspaper dailies to publish the story without having broken any confidence with official sources. The Lockheed Scandal in 1976 was one such incident where bribe taking by high-ranking figures was widely known, but it was not revealed publicly in major newspapers until the story was exposed in a weekly magazine and highly publicised in the US.⁴⁹

The three Japanese newspapers to be examined are: the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, regarded as the 'mouthpiece of the foreign ministry' and Japan's most conservative mainstream daily with a circulation of over 10 million copies; the *Mainichi Shimbun*, one of Japan's most liberal dailies with a circulation of over 4 million; *The Japan Times*, Japan's leading English language newspaper.

China

Analysis of Chinese media outlets is fundamentally different to the media analysis of democratic societies. In the past, the Chinese press was mostly dominated by the *Xinhua* (New China) News Agency. The Agency, controlled by the Party, determined newspaper content and ensured party guidelines were followed as 'virtually all the articles published on foreign policy' came from one source – *Xinhua*.⁵⁰ This rigid control of Chinese media created a 'cautious journalistic style' more sensitive to the political weather than the public's 'informational needs or interests'.⁵¹ However, according to Womack, restrictions on the Chinese media have lessened since Mao as China's new

⁴⁷ B. Stronach. *Beyond the Rising Sun: nationalism in contemporary Japan*. Praeger Publishers, Westport, 1995, p.68.

⁴⁸ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.22.

⁴⁹ K. van Wolferen. *The Enigma of Japanese Power*. Vintage Books, New York, 1990, p.137.

⁵⁰ W. Mills. 'Treatment of foreign policy issues in the regional Chinese press'. *Asian Survey*. Vol.xxi, no.7, July 1981, p.809.

⁵¹ B. Womack (ed.). *Media and the Chinese Public: a survey of the Beijing media audience*. M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1986, p.15.

focus on economic modernisation has greatly affected all aspects of Chinese life including the media. The variety and quality of the media has changed greatly as it shifts away from the 'stodginess' of national party papers to local and more informal publications.⁵²

The Chinese public now has much greater access to news and information. Recently, with the advent of the internet and a rise in imported written material through both official and unofficial channels, the Chinese government is finding it increasingly difficult to control the flow of information. The return of Hong Kong has further increased the flow of unrestricted information into China as the Hong Kong press is usually better informed than 'China's official mouthpieces' and the Chinese people are able to learn about themselves through information 'exported to Hong Kong and reimported back to China'.⁵³ The liberalisation process in China is also affecting the media as the government relinquishes supreme control and decreases financial support as the media must justify its financial existence in the marketplace.⁵⁴ Although the Chinese press is still controlled by the government, the rigid control exercised by the government in the past is slowly diminishing as Beijing has less central authority.

The three Chinese newspapers to be examined are: the *Renminribao* (*The People's Daily*), the 'mouthpiece' of the Chinese Communist Party⁵⁵ with a circulation of over three million and regarded as the publication for western watchers of China to use for analysis of the regime;⁵⁶ the *Jiefangjunbao* (*Liberation Army Daily*), the 'mouthpiece of the military', and published by the Peoples' Liberation Army as one of the few newspapers of large circulation figures that discusses foreign policy issues in China;⁵⁷ *The China Daily*, China's leading English language daily monitored closely by *Xinhua* and established in 1981.

⁵² Ibid., p.14.

⁵³ J. Chan and C. Lee. *The Hong Kong Press in China's Orbit*. Guilford Press, New York, 1991, p.147.

⁵⁴ L. Jin. 'Baxianguohai, meitijizhan'. *Huaxiawenzhai*. March 1999 (internet).

⁵⁵ B. Womack (ed.). *Media and the Chinese Public: a survey of the Beijing media audience*. M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1986, p.6.

⁵⁶ N. D. Kristoff and S. WuDunn. *China Wakes*. Nicholas Brealey, Great Britain, 1994, p.410.

⁵⁷ L. Stenseth. 'Nationalism and Foreign Policy- the case of China's Nansha rhetoric' (thesis). Centre for Development and Environment, University of Oslo, 1998, p.55.

Hong Kong

Despite the reversion to Chinese communist rule in July 1997, the former British colony of Hong Kong still offers perhaps the most dynamic media environment in Asia with press freedom second only to Japan. The press consists of pro-Hong Kong, pro-China and international newspapers, each vying for a share of the market and the chance to express their views in Asia's most vibrant community, with roles that encompass watchdog, spectator and servant of the state. Commercial consideration contributes to the competitive nature of the Hong Kong press and although political interference is now more a concern than in the past, the current threat to the Hong Kong media is caused more by declining quality due to fierce market competition, than communist intervention.⁵⁸

Due to a lesser role in the dispute than China and Japan, only two Hong Kong newspapers are to be examined; the *Mingpao*, Hong Kong's leading intellectual newspaper and regarded as slightly left-wing; *The South China Morning Post*, the leading English language newspaper Hong Kong with an international reputation and previously regarded as the voice of the colonial establishment.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The level of influence the media and public sentiment has over foreign policy has been debated for many years. US television coverage of the Vietnam War revealed to the world the potential of a pervasive and highly influential media and initiated much debate about media influence over foreign policy. The potential for media impacting on policy also varies as domestic and foreign policy issues are treated differently by both the government and the public. Domestic issues are more relevant to the daily lives of most people and consequently open to more scrutiny by the media and the public. Foreign events are usually less closely observed by the public due to less immediate impact and often irrelevance to daily living. Consequently, the government is often able to proceed with foreign policy formation and implementation unhindered by media or public influence. However, some issues such as the threat of military conflict or sovereignty

⁵⁸ F. Ching. 'Learning self-control'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. December 17, 1998, p.24.

⁵⁹ 'The perils of nationalism'. *The Economist*. September 21, 1996, p.30.

disputes do engage considerable public interest and will often deviate from the usual pattern of policy formation.

Although most people would acknowledge the power of the press and public opinion on many issues, in the domain of foreign policy the government is usually the dominant player. Formation of foreign policy is usually carried out by elites with little regard for a mostly unaware public. There are other factors which entrench the privileged position of the state in foreign policy. Firstly, media outlets serve a variety of purposes apart from public interest. Secondly, public opinion is rarely united on most issues. Thirdly, a competitive market and limited readership means that if elite consensus is not divided, followed by press saturation of a volatile issue, foreign policy is given limited coverage. It is only activated, latent public opinion on issues presented in familiar frameworks that may pose any threat to government policy. In certain situations foreign policy shifts may occur as a result of an incident provoking intense media coverage and vocal public sentiment that alter policy, if only gradually.

The relationship between the media, public sentiment and foreign policy differs from country to country. Powerful insights into this relationship can be gained through the study of correlations between media coverage and changes in a state's foreign policy, however slight. Research on the Western press has been extensive, however little scholarly work is available on the workings of media outlets in Asia and their impact on the government and society. Japan and Hong Kong have the two most liberal press structures in Asia, whilst the Chinese media, although increasingly market oriented, is still subject to the fairly rigid control of an ageing communist regime. Each society is unique and the role and influence of the press, despite its universal prominence, varies in the messages it carries and how it is perceived by both academics and the public.

2

Public Sentiment, The Media and Decision-Making on the Senkaku Dispute in Japan

The dispute over sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands has raised a number of sensitive issues in Japan, which on the surface appear powerful enough to mobilise public sentiment sufficiently for the media to affect foreign policy. The dispute deals with precarious Japanese relations with China involving elements of potential conflict, nationalism and wider concerns about North East Asian stability. This chapter examines the influence of the media and sentiment on foreign policy in Japan towards the Senkaku dispute. This examination involves a discussion of the relationships between the Japanese government and media. The political order of Japan, mentioned in the previous chapter is expanded upon. The effect of the media on foreign policy in Japan will be addressed by examining the various internal and external factors which influence the process of policy formation in Japan. The relationship these two parties have to each other and to the public is also an extension of the general introduction to the Japanese media provided in Chapter One.

This chapter analyses the coverage of the Senkaku dispute in three mainstream Japanese newspapers since the 'Lighthouse Incident' in July 1996. The significance of the 'Lighthouse Incident' is, as noted in the *Mainichi* that it caused a 'lightning rod effect' and brought to the surface strong public sentiment:

Eighteen years after the signing of the peace and friendship treaty between Japan and China, the lighthouse incident, 'in one breath' created a heightened anti-Japanese mood on the Mainland, in Taiwan and Hong Kong.
60

Although as previously mentioned, this analysis might have examined more newspapers or other media, such as television or magazines, this thesis should provide the reader some insight into Japanese Senkaku policy and the effect on it of public sentiment in Japan.

⁶⁰ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Ryodomondaiokojiraseruna' (editorial). September 22, 1996, p.5.

The Political Order in Japan

As one of the most liberal democratic countries in Asia and with a political system modelled on the US system, one would expect the influence of public sentiment and media coverage on policy decision making in Japan to be relatively strong. After the humiliation of defeat in World War II, Japan's political system was remoulded after seven years of Allied occupation, as wartime militarism was replaced by a US imposed constitution, and democratic foundations were established including a new open press. Freedom of the press was seen as a vital part of the new democratic Japan and continues to be regarded as thus. After World War II, the Japanese government adapted quickly to these new democratic structures and the task of rebuilding and strengthening the country was undertaken and achieved with unprecedented speed as the Japanese press provided an important forum for discussion and information.

The effect of the media and sentiment on foreign policy in Japan is influenced by the long-standing one-party structure. With the exit of the occupation troops in 1951, one party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), came to dominate Japanese politics. The LDP focused on economic development with a strong majority rule as opposition parties floundered in disunity. From the advent of this 'new' Japan in 1955 until 1993, one-party control created a press often prone to acting as an unofficial opposition party. The Japanese press has often been regarded as not just a 'watchdog' but also as the 'functional equivalent of opposition parties in industrial democracies'.⁶¹ The lack of political contest enabled most policies of the LDP to remain unchallenged and successful economic improvement assisted the continuation of the political domination.

Between 1946 and 1976 there was a fifty-five fold increase in the Japanese economy.⁶² The ruling party encouraged hard work and sacrifice for the greater good of a stronger Japan and as McVeigh notes, economic policy was 'designed under the banner of nationalism' and the world market was viewed as something to be 'conquered'.⁶³

⁶¹ S.J. Pharr and E.S.Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.19.

⁶² B.J. McVeigh. *The Nature of the Japanese State*. Routledge, London, 1998, p.71.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.72.

This policy of economic development enabled the LDP to rule uncontested for over 40 years. However, in 1993, a culmination of continued scandals,⁶⁴ the end of the Cold War and the emergence of Japan as an economic superpower with an increased need for successful international diplomacy, led to an end of the LDP's unchallenged rule. Although still in power, a series of coalition governments have left the ruling party more vulnerable to factional disagreement. Consequently, Japanese foreign policy is now moving towards a greater openness.

The ruling party in Japan has legitimised itself through economic success and insulated foreign policy from most external influences. The LDP and subsequent coalitions have maintained power and justified actions over the years through proven economic success, prosperity and general harmony. Since 1945, pacifist tendencies in Japanese society have played a prominent role in the formation of public opinion and consequently foreign and domestic policy-making. The Japanese press has played a role as the 'single greatest presence in the monitoring of politicians, government departments and also the corporate sector'.⁶⁵ Japanese stability over the last five decades has been a focal point of policy and reinforced by a watchful press.

The influence of the Japanese government over the media and the public is greatly enhanced by the successful teaming of the public and private sectors.⁶⁶ These departments are the place of policy decisions and of great residing power in Japan as government ministers are more instruments for policy implementation than creators of policy. Japanese economic policy after the war led to not only dramatically improved living standards but also the mobilisation of 'Japan Inc', regarded worldwide as a highly successful combined public and private business enterprise. Many have argued that it is the bureaucrats that effectively dominate the 'iron triangle' of Japan, consisting of 'businessmen, the bureaucracy and politicians',⁶⁷ and create a combined authority that enabled the government to influence the media.⁶⁸ The Japanese government has the

⁶⁴ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.134.

⁶⁵ M. Uchida. 'Japan's newspaper disease'. *Tokyo Business Today*. March 1992, p.22.

⁶⁶ K.van Wolferen. *The Enigma of Japanese Power*. Vintage Books, New York, 1990, p.44.

⁶⁷ S E.M. Charlton. *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China and Japan*. Westview Press, Colorado, 1997, p.257.

⁶⁸ S.J. Pharr and E.S.Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.13.

ability to initiate downward pressure on the media and consequently the public, which assists the government with the reinforcing of its support for its foreign policies.

Insulated foreign policy in Japan is made increasingly difficult by Japan's economic superpower status. As this status increases, so to do the number of public and political voices calling for a more assertive Japanese foreign policy as Japan moves out of the shadow of the US with a desire to expand its role. Huo states that the direction of Japan's new policy, is a result of both 'external pressure' and 'internal awakening', externally influenced by the end of the Cold War and pressure from the US and internally influenced by a growing nationalism as many Japanese advocate for a more 'politically and internationally significant role' for Japan.⁶⁹

To secure legitimacy and popular support in Japan, the government must maintain the stability and prosperity that the Japanese people have become accustomed to, which is increasingly reliant on continued economic success. Asia has become an important trade centre for Japan with bilateral relationships enhanced by foreign aid, investment and trade.⁷⁰ Changed economic circumstances in Asia have affected the region as it has been transformed from a third world environment to a flourishing economic domain. Foreign policy towards the region has been influenced and shaped by Japan's increasing dependency on Asian markets to sell products and provide inexpensive labour for major Japanese companies.

Foreign policy based on pragmatic domestic concerns and broader economic needs is usually immune to the demands of interest groups, particularly those deviating from mainstream public opinion. The success of the Japanese economy is regarded as a major priority and harmonious relations with neighbours that avoid confrontation are an important aspect of Japanese foreign policy. Especially in the case of China, as it provides Japanese companies with a large market close-by which is also increasing in both military and economic prowess. To ensure continued prosperity, relations with neighbours such as China are important and Japanese foreign policy reflects this. The Senkaku dispute however, reveals pressures on the Japan-China relationship both

⁶⁹ H.L. Huo, 'Japan and China: collaborators or rivals?' In W. Hunsberger (ed.). *Japan's Quest: The search for international role, recognition and respect*. M.E. Sharpe, 1997, p.157.

⁷⁰ R.Taylor. *Greater China and Japan: prospects for an economic partnership in East Asia*. Routledge, London, 1997, p.16.

internally and externally with regular Chinese government allegations of revived Japanese nationalism.

The Media in Japanese Society

The Japanese media's prevalence is enhanced by its penetration into Japanese society as the Japanese people as a nation read more newspapers than any other country.⁷¹ The current Japanese media has its origins dating back to the Meiji Restoration of the late 1860s. The press began as a forum for debate and its presence contributed to the creation of the modern Japanese-state as for the next half-century, the press remained a vibrant and idealistic identity. However, the competitive and idealist role of the media in Japan was greatly affected by the rise of Japanese militarism in the 1930s. Opposition to leading militarists was crushed, and the press became part of the propaganda machine, extolling war and glory for the land of the Rising Sun.

The defeat of the Japanese Empire and the militaristic regime in 1945, combined with democratic laws introduced by the occupation forces to convert the media once again into a forum of liberal discussion. The new constitution formed by the US in 1947, set guidelines for Japanese society that included securing a free press and establishing a democratic political structure. However, Pharr and Krauss reveal that although the constitution ensured 'freedom of the press' in Japan and created an open environment for the media to operate in, patterns and conventions of reporting have sometimes restricted the flow of information to the Japanese public.⁷²

The structure of the media-government relationship is unique. An understanding of the *Kisha* (journalist) *Club* system and its relationship with the government is 'crucial to an understanding of the Japanese media'.⁷³ As discussed in Chapter One, some Japanese newspaper journalists are members of *Kisha Clubs* and are invited to press conferences where they are given the opportunity to form 'intimate' relations with government

⁷¹ S.J. Pharr and E.S.Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.4.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.65.

officials.⁷⁴ However, as Uchida explains, despite 'ready access to information' there are 'evils involved,' dependence on official announcements force journalists to rely on government sources and reporters constantly fear a loss of access, causing a tendency to 'cater to the authorities'.⁷⁵ Being accessible to such sources also greatly restricts the ability to publish certain material because if information is printed without first receiving government permission, journalists face expulsion from the club and are removed from the source. McVeigh comments that such is the 'homogenised nature' of the Japanese press that the media's function is similar to that in a socialist country.⁷⁶

Despite a degree of government influence, the Japanese media is also affected by commercial consideration. Recently, the prestigious reputation of the Japanese press,⁷⁷ is currently facing changes brought on by economic downturn and a trend towards more market oriented content. It has also for some time faced criticism by conservatives for being a 'leftist apologist' and by liberals as being an 'establishment apologist'.⁷⁸ Pharr and Krauss comment on the dual personality of the Japanese media as it can be both 'guardian of public interest' and 'tool of the government'.⁷⁹ This is reflected in the mainstream Japanese press which consist of newspapers that both support and challenge the government.

As mentioned in Chapter One, four main groups can influence the composition of newspaper content, as each group wants their say represented in the structure and presentation of the paper: First the editorial staff, consisting of editors and journalists, are responsible for the wording of articles, their strategic placement and interested in information flow for the public good and acting in Japan as the 'upholders of public morality';⁸⁰ Second, newspaper proprietors interested in selling papers and making profits place increasing pressure on journalists in Japan to 'make newspapers that sell', not 'sell newspapers they make';⁸¹ Third, the advertisers as a major source of newspaper

⁷⁴ B.Stronach. *Beyond the Rising Sun; nationalism in contemporary Japan*. Praeger, Westport, 1995, p.69.

⁷⁵ M. Uchida. 'Japan's newspaper disease'. *Tokyo Business Today*. March 1992, p.21.

⁷⁶ B. J. McVeigh. *The Nature of the Japanese State*. Routledge, London, 1998, p.65.

⁷⁷ S.J. Pharr and E.S.Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.5.

⁷⁸ J.B. Lee. *The Political Character of the Japanese Press*. Seoul National University Press, 1985, p.166.

⁷⁹ S.J. Pharr and E.S.Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.159.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.138.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.139.

revenue in Japan place pressure on the newspaper to achieve high circulation figures to enable the widest possible range of advertising to take place;⁸² Fourth, the Japanese government is a key primary source of information and acts through the use of press releases and the need to manipulate, mobilise and when possible, selectively inform the public at times with ‘a degree of uniformity and precision that even the former Soviet Union failed to achieve’.⁸³ Of these four groups, it is ultimately the government with the greatest influence.

In the Senkaku dispute, each of these four groups that attempt to influence media content have a different agenda. The editorial team may be interested in informing the public of an issue regarding Japanese sovereignty and tension with close neighbours. Proprietors may see this as a story to provide exciting copy with conflict, stand-offs and even death (the drowning of Hong Kong activist David Chan). Advertisers may see such ‘exciting’ conflict as an opportunity for more papers to be sold and a larger target audience to be reached. Finally, the government may try to ensure the issue is kept low profile to restrict the level of public intrusion on foreign policy formation as rightists are not publicly encouraged or supported, yet the government stands firm and the Chinese government are portrayed as the antagonistic. The leader of the ultranationalist group behind the lighthouse construction in July 1996, Toyohisa Eto claims, ‘The Japanese media make fun of me, so I don’t talk to them anymore’.⁸⁴ If mainstream media look down upon such groups, the Japanese government need not fear ultrarightists receive positive publicity and support from within the community.

These considerations can affect the content of the newspapers, public opinion and consequently the level of media influence on foreign policy. Foreign affairs issues more likely to gain coverage are those with ‘excitement value’. The Senkaku dispute has provided this, with confrontation on the ‘high sea’ with Chinese protestors more likely to grab the attention of readers than the peaceful fishing settlements established with the Taiwanese during the dispute⁸⁵ concerning fishing rights estimated at being worth 54,000 tonnes and \$1.5 billion.⁸⁶ Each of the three Japanese newspapers covered the fishing

⁸² Ibid., p.139.

⁸³ M. Uchida. *Tokyo Business Today*. ‘Japan’s newspaper disease’. March 1992, p.20.

⁸⁴ S.Moffett. ‘Past perfect’. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 21, 1996, p.30.

⁸⁵ *Yomiuri Shimbun*. ‘Taiwan, kougino wasaranikakudai’. July 30, 1996, p.2.

⁸⁶ *The Japan Times*. ‘MSA force keeps Senkaku protest flotilla at bay’. May 27, 1997, p.3.

agreement, however, media emphasis was placed on the Japanese flag burning incident in Taiwan and consulate sit-ins in Hong Kong, rather than bilateral attempts at peaceful resolution.

Pressure on the press to highlight dramatic events and sensationalise is caused by an increasingly competitive market that editors and publishers must consider due to an economic downturn.⁸⁷ As revealed in *The Far Eastern Economic Review*, the Japanese dailies have been facing a difficult recession as profits have fallen sharply and structural changes are being made.⁸⁸ The dispute has provided the media in Japan with controversy, tension with China and even the death of a protestor. However, is this enough to spark intense press coverage and mobilise public sentiment that can in turn influence the Senkaku policy of the Japanese government?

Although the media in Japan tries to influence the public, it is also in some ways restricted by public opinion and attitudes. The press in Japan is increasingly dependent on its readership and its ability to influence foreign policy is subsequently affected by this dependence. Newspapers are aware of a growing need by the public to not just be informed, but also to be entertained. Even conservative papers such as the *Yomiuri* are being forced to adhere more to external forces such as advertisers.⁸⁹ As a consequence, to obtain a healthy readership, the Japanese media is faced with a difficult situation; the need commercially to not only entertain, but also to balance this with the need to maintain credibility. However, if an outlet wants to attract more viewers and readers, then 'entertainment value' becomes an important criterion for action, which causes the quality of articles to decline and leads to audience distrust.⁹⁰

Japan's Senkaku Policy

Japanese foreign policy regarding island sovereignty according to Prime Minister Hashimoto and the LDP's pre-election platform, was announced in the *Mainichi* to be 'firm' and that the islands clearly belonged to Japan.⁹¹ Japanese ownership has been

⁸⁷ K. Goto. 'Freedom of speech, freedom of the press'. *Look Japan*. February, 1997, p.11.

⁸⁸ J. Friedland. Hard news. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. March 10, 1994, p.44.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.45.

⁹⁰ K. Goto. 'Freedom of speech, freedom of the press'. *Look Japan*. February 1997, p.11.

⁹¹ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Jimintokoyakugashigeki'. October 2, 1996, p.3.

mostly undisputed since the Japanese government began expressing an interest in 'acquiring sovereignty' in 1885.⁹² The Japanese claim that the islands officially became part of Japan in January 1895, three months before the signing of the Shimonoseki Treaty which signified the end of the Sino-Japanese War, resulting in complete victory to Japan and the annexation of Taiwan along with other war booty. Until a United Nations team indicated the possibility of oil and gas deposits beneath the islands after tests were conducted in 1967-69⁹³, neither China nor Taiwan had protested much about Japanese ownership or US use of the islands as 'live-bombing ranges'.⁹⁴

The Japanese Foreign Ministry continues to state that Japan has sovereignty over the islands and that they are part of 'Japan's indigenous territory'.⁹⁵ The Japanese Foreign Minister stated in the *Yomiuri*:

The Chinese have been emphasising sovereignty only since the 1970s, but both historically and legally the islands belong to Japan.⁹⁶

It is this difference in perceived ownership that has much impact on the Senkaku policies as the Japanese and Chinese government both attempt to defend their claims. This difference is reflected in newspaper coverage as the Japanese government acts defensively and the Chinese government offensively as the Chinese try to acquire sovereignty over islands they do not control. The 'firm' stance taken by the Japanese government, combined with their failure to remonstrate the actions of the Japanese ultranationalists, has greatly angered the Chinese. The Chinese government has expressed repeated dissatisfaction with the Japanese government's failure to condemn outright the actions of ultrarightist groups and for not taking 'effective measures to stop harming Sino-Japanese relations'.⁹⁷ This has been supported by Japanese newspapers, in articles from the *Mainichi* and *The Japan Times* critical of the Japanese government.

The Japanese Senkaku policy was affected by a number of other factors. The visit of Prime Minister Hashimoto to the infamous Japanese Yasukuni Shrine for the war-dead in July 1996, angered many in Asia, not least the Chinese. It also had an effect on the

⁹² G.Austin. *China's Ocean Frontier*. Allen and Unwin, Australia. 1998, p.169.

⁹³ T. Cheng. 'the Sino-Japanese dispute over the Tiao-yu-tai (Senkaku) Islands and the law of territorial acquisition. *Virginia Journal of Law*. Vol. 14, no.2, p.222.

⁹⁴ G.Austin. *China's Ocean Frontier*. Allen and Unwin, Australia. 1998, p.172.

⁹⁵ *The Japan Times*. 'Taiwanese fishermen to protest Senkaku claims'. July 22, 1996, p.2.

⁹⁶ *Yomiuri Shimbun (evening edition)*. 'Anpokaikenkaikinsuzu'. September 21, 1996, p.21.

⁹⁷ *The Japan Times*. 'Lawmaker lands on Senkaku isle'. May 7, 1997, p.2.

dispute as it was regarded in the *Mainichi* as having made the problem 'more complicated'.⁹⁸ This incident combined with the Japanese government amending the defence treaty with the US in April 1966 as noted in the *Mainichi*, which added to tension with China.⁹⁹ Because the dispute was tainted by other events, it is difficult to isolate the media's affect on Senkaku policy as other pressures affect not only government policy but also the media.

Japanese foreign policy formation is also influenced by a need for physical security. The April 1996 Tokyo Summit on defence with the US, strengthened Japan's resolve regarding the dispute as the US indicated it would support Japan in a military conflict with China over the islands.¹⁰⁰ This commitment to 'defend the islets' reiterated an earlier commitment made by the US in 1974¹⁰¹ which was mentioned in the *Mainichi* in October 1996.¹⁰² This joint commitment to regional security came only a month after the Taiwan missile crisis, in March of that year. Secured military commitment from the US also angered the Chinese who in the *Renminribao* declared the treaty to be one aimed at 'containing China'.¹⁰³

The Japanese adopted a policy of firmly defending the islands and Japan's territorial waters. As Zhang states, 'Japan appeared adamant during the heated tension with China in September and October' [1996].¹⁰⁴ Japan has done this with well-coordinated efforts by the Maritime Safety Agency (MSA) to prevent Chinese protestors landing on the islands, having up to 60 vessels in one confrontation to repel the Chinese. This represents Japan's clear position on the islands. However, as questioned by an article in *The Japan Times* from the Singaporean *Strait Times*, what did such a show of force reveal about Japanese Senkaku policy?

If the government were not using the rightists as a proxy, what were the frigates, planes and helicopters doing 'defending' the islands against unarmed civilian protestors in fishing craft and rusting buckets? Shore patrol craft would have sufficed.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Tainichihansaranikanetsu'. October 2, 1996, p.3.

⁹⁹ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Kanjoronsenkoushiundoni'. September 19, 1996, p.9.

¹⁰⁰ M. Zhang. 'The emerging Asia-Pacific triangle'. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. Vol.22, no.1. April 1998, p. 58.

¹⁰¹ *New York Times*. 'Would you fight for these islands?' October 20, 1996 (internet).

¹⁰² *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Senkakuyujinarabeigungashienshutsudo'. October 20, 1996, p.3.

¹⁰³ *Renminribao*. 'Ribenieganchunshi'. August 30, 1996, p.1.

¹⁰⁴ M. Zhang. 'The emerging Asia-Pacific triangle'. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. Vol.22, no.1. April 1998, p.58.

¹⁰⁵ *The Japan Times*. 'Needless tension over the islands'. October 3, 1996, p.20.

Although calling for bilateral harmony, the Japanese government appeared determined to defend the islands with increasing resolve and resources.

In July 1996, for the first time Japan's Defence Agency's annual 'White Paper', listed China as a regional threat. According to an *USIA-Opinion Analysis*, 54 per cent of those surveyed viewed the Chinese use of force over the islands as a serious threat. After the Taiwan missile crisis, 'both Japanese public opinion and the Japanese government took a tougher view of China'.¹⁰⁶ The increased expenditure by China on its military, in particular the modernisation of its air and naval forces, also caused concern amongst Japanese scholars.¹⁰⁷ Physical security concerns were real and some LDP members called for a more aggressive Senkaku policy, including that the Japanese Self Defence Force (SDF) be dispatched to the islands in May 1997 to prepare for a planned landing by Taiwanese activists.¹⁰⁸ This revealed some dissension within the Japanese government elite but as the Chinese and Japanese governments worked towards a joint resolution, internal differences within the Japanese government did not threaten the overall outcome.

Despite the 'rocks of contention',¹⁰⁹ causing political problems for both the Chinese and Japanese governments, the Japanese government continued to reiterate the importance of bilateral relations¹¹⁰ as restrained behaviour persisted throughout the height of the dispute with high level meetings and exchanges between the two governments continuing.¹¹¹ Such importance placed on good relations reflected the major determinants of foreign policy being not the issue of island sovereignty but the preservation of diplomatic ties. The Japanese government insisted that actions by the Japanese nationalists would not harm bilateral relations. The Japanese Foreign Minister stated in the *Yomiuri* that, 'Overall, Japan-China relations would not be affected'.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ M. Zhang. 'The emerging Asia-Pacific triangle'. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. Vol.22, no.1. April 1998, p.57.

¹⁰⁷ A.Kusano and T.Umemoto. *Gendainihongaikonobunseki*. University of Tokyo Press, 1995, p.120.

¹⁰⁸ *The Japan Times*. 'SDF won't stop Senkaku landing'. May 10, 1997, p.3.

¹⁰⁹ B. Gilley, S. Moffett, J. Baum and M. Forney. 'Rocks of contention'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. September 19, 1996, p.15.

¹¹⁰ M. Zhang. 'The emerging Asia-Pacific triangle'. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. Vol.22, no.1. April 1998, p.59.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.59.

¹¹² *Yomiuri Shimibun*. 'Senkakutodaitekkyomotomeru'. September 25, 1996, p.1.

Both countries acknowledged that the issue should not take precedence over shared economic prosperity and security. However, the Japanese government appeared to counteract this with a need to appease a domestic audience that had shown little interest in the dispute. This was despite the government's inactivity regarding Japanese nationalists' landing on the islands being criticised by some leading newspapers including an editorial in *The Japan Times* that commented:

Apparently, both it (the Japanese government) and the Shinshinto (Nishimura's opposition party) leadership preferred to play to domestic audiences than act like real statesmen.¹¹³

This suggests that public opinion in Japan regarding the islands and perhaps also the Japanese government's dealings with China, are important domestic political issues.

Although the Japanese government's basic Senkaku policy was not greatly affected by public opinion or the media some shifts in policy were evident. The MSA defence of the island intensified in May 1997 as measures were taken to prevent Chinese protestors landing on the islands after a member of the Diet's Lower House and of the leading opposition party, Shingo Nishimura landed on the islands with a reporter on 7 May and again aggravated the issue. An increase in Japanese patrol vessels was also a response to the successful Chinese penetration of an MSA cordon in October 1996. In the midst of Chinese protestors planning another large scale 'assault' on the islands, the Japanese government announced that in the future 'foreign nationals that landed would be arrested'.¹¹⁴ An article in *The Japan Times* argued in late May that it was because of this 'strong stand' taken by the Japanese government that, 'Hong Kong-based Chinese stopped visiting the islands'.¹¹⁵ The visibly stronger stance taken by the government was focused on by the Japanese media, which had previously commented more on the actions of the Chinese government and protestors.

Public Sentiment in Japan

The ability of public sentiment to influence foreign policy is affected by a diversity of opinion being expressed by a variety of groups, all with different causes to campaign.

¹¹³ *The Japan Times*. 'Footprints on the Senkakus'. May 8, 1997, p.18.

¹¹⁴ *Yomiuri Shimbun*. 'Jorikugaikokujintaihomo'. May 9, 1997, p.3.

¹¹⁵ *The Japan Times*. 'No need to tiptoe around the Senkakus'. May 25, 1997, p.21.

These groups vary not only in their opinions but also in their motives, resources and ability to have an impact on the political agenda. Domestically, Japanese policy-makers are increasingly forced to consider public opinion when making decisions as 'bureaucrats work through the newspapers to generate appeal for their policies'.¹¹⁶ With increasing economic stability in the five decades since the end of World War II, Japan has become a nation proud of its social harmony. Since the 1960s and the development of greater concern over the 'social and environmental costs of economic development',¹¹⁷ demonstrations have become more prevalent in Japan. The public, with an increase in citizens' movements is constantly demanding greater policy accountability from its elected officials.¹¹⁸ Charlton notes an escalation of public criticism in Japan, which reflects disillusionment over the government's apparent inability to handle challenges including 'economic slowdown, international strategic changes, and the problems accompanying fifty years of postwar development'.¹¹⁹ The Japanese government's increased aggressiveness towards the Chinese over the sovereignty issue may have been as a result of the government's concern with increased restlessness and expressions of latent unfavourable opinion towards government policies.

The public does not have 'one sentiment' and instead consists of many groups with varying opinions on a variety of issues; whose influence and willingness to demonstrate has increased considerably since the 1960s. As mentioned earlier, some groups in Japan are also demanding the government act more appropriately as an economic superpower and that in order to become a 'key global player' Japan must seek 'first-rate military power'. However, just as some groups argue for a more assertive government, so are their groups advocating for the government to maintain the status quo.¹²⁰ The relationship the media has with the public is influenced by this diversity of opinion, as groups ranging from consumer bodies and environmentalists to ultranationalists, use the

¹¹⁶ M. Uchida. 'Japan's newspaper disease'. *Tokyo Business Today*. March 1992, p20.

¹¹⁷ S.E.M. Charlton. *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China and Japan*. Westview Press, Colorado, 1997, p.258.

¹¹⁸ S.E.M. Charlton. *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China and Japan*. Westview Press, Colorado, 1997, p.258.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.258.

¹²⁰ H.L. Huo, 'Japan and China: collaborators or rivals?' In W. Hunsberger (ed.). *Japan's Quest: The search for international role, recognition and respect*. M.E. Sharpe, 1997, p.159.

media for the 'tantalising' opportunities it presents them, such as the ability to transform their concerns into the agendas of policy-makers.¹²¹

Protests in Japan vary in intensity and media support. However, thus far despite ultranationalist trips to the islands, there have been few signs of public expression. Active lobby groups in Japan are usually concerned with only domestic issues and Japanese opinion has been silent and 'disinterested', especially compared to vocal, well attended protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The dispute appears to have provided most of the Japanese public with little impetus for overt action apart from the actions of the ultranationalists. Ultrarightist groups have, in the past, acted dramatically and grabbed media attention. Such actions have included; a car being driven into the gates of the Korean embassy, a politician in Nagoya shot for criticising the emperor, a newspaper editor murdered for writing an article critical of the royal family and in 1990, the mayor of Nagasaki was shot and wounded by an extremist for criticising the late emperor's role in World War II.¹²² However, after a brief duration in the limelight, these events passed and the nature of these groups still remains extremist and regarded as 'embarrassing reminders of Japan's militaristic past and frightening evidence of gangland extortionists'.¹²³

The Senkaku campaign in Japan was publicly championed by a fringe movement usually associated with 'the mob'.¹²⁴ The actions of ultranationalists are however, looked down on by Japanese society as 'an embarrassment', and an 'ill-mannered reminder of an era the nation has long tried to forget'.¹²⁵ Japanese public sentiment is much less visible in the dispute compared to the Chinese, as the majority of the Japanese public appear to be indifferent, especially when compared to the volatile Chinese protestors. However, the Japanese protestors were reasserting their government's existing possession of the islands, as opposed to the Chinese who were campaigning to acquire possession. Prominent right wing activities in Japan represent the views of only

¹²¹ S.J. Pharr and E.S.Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.219.

¹²² S. Moffett. 'Past perfect'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 21, 1996, p.30.

¹²³ *The Japan Times*. 'Ultra-rightists become more marginalized'. July 18, 1996, p.3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹²⁵ S. Moffett. 'Past perfect'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 21, 1996, p.30.

a fringe element with dubious motives, that are arguably based as much on a need for self-publicity, as on patriotic fervour.¹²⁶

In Japan, sentiment is not always expressed overtly as influential groups such as powerful trade organisations with large investment interests in China, which would be financially jeopardised by bilateral conflict, exert more discreet influence on government foreign policy. These groups may not receive front-page coverage, but have a much greater influence as part of 'Japan Inc' over foreign policy than fringe extremists. Japanese Senkaku policy is affected by business interests concentrated in Asia, particularly China and the islands in Japan being 'largely unheard of'.

Japanese public sentiment regarding the islands is varied as opinions differ on what is perceived to be a desirable outcome to the dispute. Japanese fishermen, like Taiwanese fishermen are concerned about their rights and the greatest possible area in which to legally be able to fish in. Other groups taking a pragmatic viewpoint see economic prosperity as a major priority along with regional harmony and are keen to negotiate an agreement in order for both sides to benefit. Still other groups such as nationalists or sympathetic Diet members may wish for a confrontation and seek to provoke China. The intentions of these groups are important, as it can reveal the extent to which they will go in order to have their opinions heard.

Is this territorial dispute able to inflame passions and patriotic fervour in Japan enough to demand an assertive response from the government and influence Senkaku policy? This is an issue concerning sovereignty and nationalism against old enemy China. Are these not ingredients to stir nationalism and incite a military response from the government should the Chinese government start to lay stronger claims? What makes some groups expression of sentiment more vocal and dominant than others? It would appear that although the ultranationalists receive the publicity, the majority is willing to take a pragmatic approach towards the islands.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.30.

Media-Sentiment-Policy Relationship in Japan

In Japan, the media-sentiment-policy relationship is affected by a number of external factors. As mentioned in Chapter One there is difficulty in isolating one influence from another and the specific impact on policy of each group. The Japanese media act as a watchdog and the unofficial 'opposition party'; the public are highly literate and avid newspaper readers;¹²⁷ and the government is the instrument behind the Japanese economic miracle. Within each group exists a number of factions with differing opinions, motives and varying levels of influence.

The relationship between policy and the media can be divided as stated in Chapter One, into domestic and foreign policy. In Japan, domestic policy issues are more relevant to the public and consequently, sometimes affected by local movements and campaigns. In some instances, newspaper content can be influenced by such activity due to a need to sell to the audience and not restrict their market potential. Large national newspapers in Japan invite audience loss by going against majority opinion and there is 'little enthusiasm' for support of minority views that are 'out of step' with popular thought and without the support of a large organisation.¹²⁸ Hence, the Japanese media pays little attention to protests and individual complaints and although protest groups in Japan receive publicity, it is usually condemned and 'marginalised'.¹²⁹

The Japanese public's disinterest in foreign issues is reinforced by its famed 'international apathy': Japan's UN Ambassador (until 1994), Yoshio Hatano said, 'The Japanese...want to stay out of the world's wars. So safe is Japan that its people cannot stand the thought of danger'.¹³⁰ This lack of enthusiasm to get involved in international activity has been contributed to by constitutional restriction (section nine), which inhibits Japanese forces going abroad. This has been enhanced through the mass media, who appear to 'disseminate a friendly face' but are actually manipulating the public and

¹²⁷ S.J. Pharr and E.S. Krauss. *Media and Politics in Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1996, p.282.

¹²⁸ K. Goto. 'Freedom of speech, freedom of the press'. *Look Japan*. February 1997, p.11.

¹²⁹ *The Japan Times*. 'Ultra-rightists become more marginalized'. July 18, 1996, p.3.

¹³⁰ *The Economist*. 'The new nationalists'. January 14, 1995, p.21.

creating a 'political apathy'.¹³¹ This apathy in Japan is not just towards international issues, but also often domestic ones. However, this manipulation by the government is often necessary as explained in Chapter One. In Japan, a pacifist public little aware or interested in Japanese foreign policy, allows the government more room to deal effectively with bilateral relations and formulate policy.

The foreign policy-media relationship in Japan can also be affected by the ideology of the ruling party. Nishimura's landing was in keeping with a 'campaign pledge' made before the general elections in October 1996.¹³² Nishimura, in a subtle attack on the Chinese government, justified his actions by claiming he was free to land on the islands and declared that 'the Japanese government allows its citizens to travel freely with their democratic right to do so' and that it was 'natural' for a Diet member to 'inspect part of Japanese territory'.¹³³ Although the Japanese government is democratic and has acknowledged the right of citizens to travel freely, it 'quickly expressed displeasure over his actions'.¹³⁴ Japanese Senkaku policy and related actions may have been based on both a need to appease domestically and a desire to gain increased support from within the constituency.

Regarding political issues, the Japanese media has displayed a tendency to downplay events. Japan is regarded as a politically apathetic environment, especially regarding foreign affairs, and news that would 'cause an uproar' in other industrialised democracies often only results in a 'faint murmur' in Japan.¹³⁵ McVeigh describes the 1992 incident in the Sea of Japan where North Korea carried out missile tests, and claimed that compared to international coverage, local reporting was minimal. In contrast, in the Japanese summer of 1994, the Japanese media audience became obsessed with a month-long coverage and investigation into a duck that had been shot in the head with an arrow.¹³⁶ The Japanese media audience is not encouraged by the ruling elite to be involved in foreign affairs. This is because of the government's aim to

¹³¹ B. J. McVeigh. *The Nature of the Japanese State*. Routledge, London, 1998, p.66.

¹³² *The Japan Times*. 'No need to tiptoe around the Senkakus'. May 25, 1997, p.21.

¹³³ *The Japan Times*. 'Politician draws criticism for visiting Senkaku isle'. May 7, 1997, p.1.

¹³⁴ *The Japan Times*. 'Politician draws criticism for visiting Senkaku isle'. May 7, 1997, p.1.

¹³⁵ B. J. McVeigh. *The Nature of the Japanese State*. Routledge, London, 1998, p.66.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.66.

achieve greater efficiency with some degree of 'secrecy' in the areas of defence and foreign affairs.¹³⁷

Newspaper Analysis in Japan after the Lighthouse Incident

From the three newspapers examined, a total of 182 articles were collected in the two-year period from 1996-1998. In 1996, the analysis starts from the date of the lighthouse construction on July 14th and continues through to the end of October, the last month of activity that year. The analysis also covers May 1997 when a Diet member landed together with a journalist on the islands and June/July 1998, when a flotilla of Chinese protest vessels tried to land on the islands. The latest incident took place in late June 1998, when a Taiwanese fishing boat was damaged and, according to Chinese sources, sunk by an intervening Japanese MSA vessel. However, the actual sinking is disputed by both Japanese and western media sources which claimed that the boat was merely damaged.¹³⁸ They also claim that the boat had been deliberately tampered with to ensure a sinking and hence create an awkward situation for the Japanese government.

Coverage of the dispute in Japan was minimal until Chinese protests escalated in August 1996 and were used as a media focal point. Although the Chinese had been protesting in not only Asia but also North America since 1972, the islands were largely unknown to the Japanese people. As *The Far Eastern Economic Review* observed:

When Eto's group built the Diaoyu lighthouse, Japanese newspapers largely ignored the incident. Only when strong protests erupted in Hong Kong and Taiwan did it become a story. Until then, most Japanese hadn't even heard of the islands.¹³⁹

It is difficult to assess the true implications of this lack of awareness due to a variety of other potential influences, however possibilities include a typical low key Japanese approach to a potentially inflammatory foreign relations issue, or a lack of exciting news potential. Despite this, Japanese newspapers eventually published reports with coverage in the *Mainichi* almost daily in September and October 1996 with 51 articles for the two months (including evening editions). Although some criticism was aimed at the Japanese government, there was general affirmation of Tokyo's claims, and although

¹³⁷ P.Young and P.Jesser. *The Media and the Military: from the Crimea to Desert Strike*. Macmillian, Australia, 1997, p.10.

¹³⁸ *BBC Online Network*. 'Asia-Pacific island protest boat attacked'. June 24, 1998.

editorials called for a 'calm response to the dispute', they also generally 'supported Tokyo's claims to the Senkakus'.¹⁴⁰

Yomiuri Shimbun

The *Yomiuri Shimbun* is Japan's largest newspaper with a 'conservative voice,' 'autocratic management' and a reputation for 'hard-nosed sales tactics' with 'substantial sway' over Japanese public opinion.¹⁴¹ The *Yomiuri* in 1996, had from July until the end of October, published 31 articles on the dispute. This was about the same as *The Japan Times*, but only half the number published by direct rival the *Mainichi*. This included front-page articles in 1996 on 7 August, 25 September, 27 September, 7 October (in both the daily and evening edition) and 13 October. In 1997, the issue resurfaced on the front-page in May when Nishimura landed on the islands. The emphasis in most articles was mainly on Hong Kong and Taiwanese protests and the active involvement of their politicians.¹⁴²

The reporting was quite neutral, providing information on the incidents with no editorial comment or opinion, but merely reports on what occurred and what was said, with most emphasis on the Chinese protests. This reporting style was in direct contrast to China's main newspaper, the *Renminribao*, which argued not only the Chinese case, but also strongly condemned the actions of the Japanese, referring constantly to militaristic Japan with continual references to the war. Other points of attack against the Japanese government in the Chinese press included; Hashimoto's Yasukuni Shrine visit in July 1996, the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 and the Japanese textbook controversy which has haunted the Japanese government since the issue surfaced in the early 1980s.

In May 1997, the 'pro-government' *Yomiuri* published only seven articles and in June/July 1998 only two. After a volatile 1996, coverage in the *Yomiuri* decreased considerably especially compared to *The Japan Times* and the *Mainichi*. Perhaps this reflected the Japanese government trying to downplay the dispute. The Japanese Foreign Minister condemned the actions of Nishimura in early May 1997 and stated in the *Yomiuri* that:

¹³⁹ S. Moffett. 'The right and its wrongs'. *The Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 21, 1996, p.29.

¹⁴⁰ *The Japan Times*. 'Japan must defuse the islands powder keg'. October 20, 1996, p.20.

¹⁴¹ J. Friedland. 'Hard news'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. March 10, 1994, p.44

¹⁴² *Yomiuri Shimbun*. 'Tsugekikougisenokeikaku'. September 27, 1996, p.5.

The Japanese islands are still a part of Japanese territory, however, we cannot let this damage friendly relations with China.¹⁴³

This statement and condemnation of Nishimura indicated a slight shift from the Senkaku policy of the Japanese government in 1996, which ignored the activities of Japanese nationalists. This attitude combined with an increase in island defence and the Japanese government vowing to prevent further Japanese nationalist activity, reflecting also a response to both the internal and domestic audiences.

Mainichi Shimbun

The *Mainichi Shimbun* is one of Japan's leading liberal dailies. From July until the end of October 1996, it published a total of 62 articles, 31 more than the *Yomiuri* and 30 more than *The Japan Times*. This included front-page articles on 25 September (evening edition), 26 September, daily and evening editions, (the former having a provocative photo of Chinese protestors in a speed boat with a Chinese flag flying), 27 September and 7 October, evening edition, the latter with a large photo of the Chinese and Taiwanese flags planted on one of the islands by Chinese protestors. Most articles were neutral in the reporting of incidents and without the emotive style of the Chinese and Hong Kong newspapers.

The drowning of the Hong Kong activist in September 1996, received slightly more attention than in the *Yomiuri*, with a small headline regarding the death. However, the larger headlines focused on the prolonging of the dispute and questioned Chinese motives for protesting and the effect of upcoming Hong Kong elections on the enthusiasm of certain Hong Kong activists.¹⁴⁴ The *Mainichi* provided numerous reports on the volatile activity of the Chinese protestors and was slightly aggressive towards the inactivity of the Japanese government and declared that the Japanese government should have, 'acted sensibly much earlier'.¹⁴⁵

The argument made by the *Mainichi* was supported in the political affairs magazine *Sekai*, which commented on the Japanese government's failure to take preventative

¹⁴³ *Yomiuri Shimbun*(evening edition). 'Senkakugyotodonijoriku'. May 6, 1997, p.1.

¹⁴⁴ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Nagabikukasenkakumondai'. September 27, 1996, p.3.

¹⁴⁵ M. Forney, S. Moffett and G. Silverman. 'Ghosts of the past'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 10, 1996, p.24.

action against the ultranationalists.¹⁴⁶ The conservative *Yomiuri* did not comment on the government's actions or inaction. The *Mainichi*, although not as open as *The Japan Times*, still suggested that the Japanese government needed to act more decisively to avoid escalation of the situation.

Critical comments in the *Mainichi* towards the Japanese government's Senkaku policy, were accompanied with a questioning of the motives and actions of the Chinese protestors and the Hong Kong media. One article in the *Mainichi*¹⁴⁷ quoted a Hong Kong radio journalist who claimed that the 'hysteria' caused by the protests and subsequent death of a protestor, was the partial responsibility of the Hong Kong media. The commentator also quoted an amount spent thus far on the protest that could have instead been spent on 'building a children's hospital'. The journalist also asked if it was not for the stress and anxiety caused by the looming Hong Kong Handover, would the Hong Kong protests be this hysterical? As a more liberal newspaper, the *Mainichi* offered opinion in contrast to the conservative *Yomiuri* which made no speculation as to the nature of Chinese protests. In May 1997, it published 19 articles and six in June/July 1998. Although without the diversity of argument and debate in *The Japan Times*, the *Mainichi* provided the domestic audience with regular information and subtle editorial comment and as a liberal alternative to the pro-government *Yomiuri*.

The Japan Times

Japan's leading English language newspaper, despite the 'Lighthouse Incident' occurring on July 14th, reported nothing until July 22nd. This article focused not on the lighthouse construction but on Taiwanese protests,¹⁴⁸ with the construction of the lighthouse not even mentioned until paragraph seven, halfway through the article. The article focused on Taiwanese fishing groups planning to sail to the islands to protest and provided background information on the dispute, with only one small paragraph on Japan's sovereignty claim. Four days before this article appeared, *The Japan Times*, published an article entitled 'Ultrarights become more marginalized,' which discussed ultraright groups, their dwindling numbers, gangster connections and claimed that

¹⁴⁶ M. Kojima. 'Nichutairitsuosawanishitasenkakushotomondai'. *Sekai*. November 1996, p.257.

¹⁴⁷ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Seinihenkangoenofuan'. October 15, 1996, p.4.

¹⁴⁸ *The Japan Times*. 'Taiwanese fishermen to protest Senkaku claims'. July 22, 1996, p.2

ultranationalist groups were more about needing a political front in order to make money than about fanaticism and ideology.¹⁴⁹

The total number of articles in *The Japan Times* was considerably fewer than in the vernacular press. From July until the end of October 1996, *The Japan Times* published a total of 32 articles (including letters to the editor) about the dispute, with the majority appearing in October. In May 1997 there were 21 articles and only two in June/July 1998. Most of the articles focused not on the actions of the Japanese nationalists or statements by the Japanese Foreign Ministry, but on Chinese protests in Taiwan and Hong Kong.¹⁵⁰ The Chinese government statements published reflected aggression towards Japanese sovereignty claims. However, they also, as did the Japanese government, continued to emphasise that friendly bilateral relations between China and Japan were important and that relations would not be damaged by the issue. The paper provided a wide range of opinion on the dispute.

In the case of the disputes most dramatic incident, the drowning of a protestor from Hong Kong this warranted only one headline which appeared in *The Japan Times* on the 27 September (*Activist dies in Senkaku standoff*). However, this was not followed up with another report the next day. Two days later the paper published a letter to the editor by a Chinese-American arguing Chinese sovereignty.¹⁵¹ The next day, 30 September, a small article appeared in 'National News Briefs' on page two, about Taiwanese and Hong Kong activists planning to visit the islands. Nothing was reported again for seven days, until a Chinese combined flotilla penetrated the Japanese MSA cordon on 7 October, to plant flags on the islands, which were quickly removed by the MSA. In May 1997, the newspaper published 21 articles with opinions that both condemned and supported the actions of diet member, Shingo Nishimura.

Japanese media opinion on the dispute included an editorial in May 1997 strongly condemning Nishimura's actions and the Japanese government's failure to act decisively and instead preferring to take 'refuge in hand-wringing' while a crisis brewed.¹⁵² The newspaper also included letters to the editor both for and against Japanese sovereignty,

¹⁴⁹ *The Japan Times*. 'Ultra-rights become more marginalized'. July 18, 1996, p.3.

¹⁵⁰ *The Japan Times*. 'Beijing lodges protest over Senkaku rightist group'. September 12, 1996, p.2.

¹⁵¹ *The Japan Times*. 'The islands are Chinese'. September 29, 1996, p.18.

¹⁵² *The Japan Times*. Footprints on the Senkakus. May 8, 1997, p.18.

an editorial comment from the Singaporean newspaper, *The Strait Times* (14 May 1997), reminding the Japanese government to 'keep trouble makers in check', and opinions from foreign analysts and Japanese academics arguing both for and against a more assertive Japanese foreign policy. The paper provided an open forum for debate and opinion especially compared to the rhetoric put forth by its counterpart in China, *The China Daily*. It also provided much wider discussion of dispute related events and issues than the vernacular press (for these reasons it has been more widely referenced in this chapter than the vernacular press). Readers of this newspaper had the opportunity to gain a more balanced knowledge of the dispute than from any of the other newspapers discussed.

Effect on Senkaku Policy

In the dispute there were many factors capable of influencing Japanese foreign policy. However, it seems that the most influential were the pragmatists with a focus on continued good relations with China and economic prosperity. Prime Minister Hashimoto eventually cancelled his second visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in October 1996 at the height of the tensions, possibly as a result of both domestic and international pressure. The Japanese government was aware of the anti-Japanese sentiment already existing in the Chinese territories as Chinese newspapers carried a steady stream of articles criticising Japan for wartime atrocities and for 'failing' to acknowledge their militant past. As the Japanese government was quoted in the *Mainichi*:

Setting a spark to the grass roots of the Chinese people's anti-Japanese sentiment would cause serious problems.¹⁵³

In Japan there was intense media coverage in September and October of 1996. Media coverage included reports of strong anti-Japanese protests that involved flag burning, a forceful consulate 'sit-in protest',¹⁵⁴ eggs being thrown, a call to boycott Japanese goods in both Hong Kong and Taiwan,¹⁵⁵ and a protest demonstration at a Japanese school in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong protest group claimed that the Japanese were responsible for the 'invasion of China' and that for the 'sake of future peace, proper historical

¹⁵³ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Dakaisakumirarenunihon'. September 19, 1996, p.9.

¹⁵⁴ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Nihonryojikandesuwarikomikougi'. October 10, 1996, p.7.

¹⁵⁵ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Senkakumondaidenihonseishohinfubaiyobikake'. September 17, 1996, p.3.

education in Japan was vital'.¹⁵⁶ Despite this, there appeared to be little response from the Japanese public and excluding extremist activity, few expressions of opinion on Japanese Senkaku policy.

Reports in Japanese newspapers focused on the actions of Chinese protestors. In early October 1996, after four months of volatile activity, Chinese protestors landed on the islands successfully for the first time. The protestors planted Chinese and Taiwanese flags which were quickly removed by the MSA. After this incident, the Japanese government then issued a warning that future 'illegal trespassers' would be arrested and held.¹⁵⁷ This indicated a slight policy shift on behalf of the Japanese government, which was reinforced in May 1997 when the next large scale Chinese attempt to land on the islands took place and the MSA, determined not to see a repeat of the October 1996 confrontation, ensured that the island were successfully defended. This included the temporary detainment of three Taiwanese protestors, for 'illegally entering Japanese territory' without proper documentation.¹⁵⁸ This represented a definite shift in Japanese Senkaku policy as the government become more assertive in its efforts to defend the islands.

Japanese newspapers reported provocative events with much greater impartiality than the Chinese media. This reporting was without the emotive and nationalistic rhetoric of the Chinese and Hong Kong press.¹⁵⁹ The *Mainichi* as a more liberal publication, provided greater coverage than its more conservative rival, the *Yomiuri*. The focus was not on the actions of nationalists or even Foreign Ministry comment, but on the response of the Chinese and their protests. However, just as the flag raising and flotilla expeditions subsided, so did media coverage.

The Japanese government's Senkaku policy was portrayed objectively in the newspapers as 'firm'. Actions taken by groups were reported as such, and comments and statements made by activists and government officials were reported as being 'said' and 'claimed' in contrast to the Chinese media which reported as a collective stance taken on behalf of the Chinese government and the entire nation. The Chinese press in contrast, lacked any

¹⁵⁶ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Jinminnipogaronbun'. September 19, 1996, p.14.

¹⁵⁷ *Yomiuri Shimbun (evening edition)*. 'Fuhojoriku, konggodahomo'. October 7, 1996, p.2.

¹⁵⁸ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Ichijifutarikosoku'. May 27, 1997, p.1.

¹⁵⁹ S. Tomisaka.. 'Senkakushotodaregahannichinoshuboushaka'. *Bungeishunju*. December 1996, p.368.

real impartiality, which will be discussed in Chapter Three. Although the Japanese newspapers showed indifference and maintained 'facts', as mentioned in Chapter One, apparent partiality shown by the press does not negate underlying messages as the press is aware that the reader has some background knowledge, and is familiar with the reporting style, intention and position of the newspaper. Both vernacular newspapers referred to the waters around the islands as Japanese 'territorial waters' and the Chinese government and protestors were described as being 'strident and inflammatory'¹⁶⁰ while Japanese actions were depicted as justified acts of self-defence. The Japanese vernacular press although subtle in its expression of opinion, were mostly pro-government on the issue of territorial ownership.

All three newspapers gave the dispute front-page coverage at some stage. However, it was only *The Japan Times*, a newspaper with a predominantly expatriate audience, that gave the dispute a banner headline. The motto of *The Japan Times* declares 'without fear or favour' and editorial pursuits appear to be striving for this with its diversity of comment, publishing a letter to the editor of *The Japan Times* arguing the Chinese government's case written by a Chinese-American shows a greater openness to the dispute than on the Chinese side. In China, the English language equivalent, *The China Daily*, contained no such argument presenting the Japanese side. In the Chinese press, letters to the editor were aggressive, condemning the Japanese for not only the Senkaku dispute but also numerous other acts of aggression Japan has inflicted on China since the late 19th century.¹⁶¹ The only Japanese argument that appeared in the Chinese press was excerpts from a 25-year-old paper by a Japanese historian, Kiyoshi Inoue, arguing that the islands belonged to China not Japan.¹⁶²

The process of policy formation is carefully insulated in Japan. The government's influence on the media and subsequently the public, is enhanced by the *Kisha Club* system which allows the Japanese government much control over the dissemination of information. It can also be said that the possible influence of lobby groups in society is usually minimal, particularly regarding foreign affairs due to the Japanese government

¹⁶⁰ J. Wilkinson. 'Hypocrisy over the Senkaku Islands'. *The New Observer* (internet).

¹⁶¹ *The China Daily*. August 22, 1996, p.6.

¹⁶² *The China Daily*. May 9, 1997, p.8.

restricting when possible public access to information and a generally apathetic Japanese public.

Regarding differences between the vernacular press, for the domestic audience the *Yomiuri* and *Mainichi* make continual references to the Chinese entering Japanese territorial waters. The *Mainichi*, and the more conservative *Yomiuri*, constantly refer to the islands as being in Japan's 'territorial waters and being 'violated' by Chinese protestors. This is in contrast to the expatriate-oriented *The Japan Times* which says that the protestors entered waters 'claimed' by the Japanese. These differences highlight the different audiences being catered to by the Japanese press, hence revealing some importance attached to catering to reader tastes and public opinion.

After the death of the Hong Kong activist and an escalation of the problem in late September 1996, the Japanese police raided the home of a member of the ultrarightist group responsible for the building of the controversial lighthouse that had according to the *Mainichi*, 'escalated anti-Japanese protests in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan'.¹⁶³ The member was arrested for the illegal possession of a weapon. One can only speculate to the connection of this arrest to bilateral problems, as at the time, the Japanese government was facing pressure from the Chinese government to deal with ultrarightists and even some criticism from local Japanese newspapers for failing to oppose Japanese activists.

The Japanese government's failure to restrain Japanese ultrarightists landing on the islands was perhaps influenced by domestic factors. An article in *The Japan Times* from a Singaporean newspaper commented:

It is not difficult to see why landing on the Diaoyu Islands, claimed by China, Taiwan and Japan, should be a ritual much favored by Japanese politicians with an eye on the nationalist vote. The Senkakus, as they are known in Japanese, are a convenient and inexpensive way of using patriotism to promote political popularity.¹⁶⁴

Although the Japanese government initially acknowledged an 'unwavering' position on sovereignty, there were signs of policy adjustment. What was the significance of this arrest reported in the *Renminribao* that also led to a police search of the group's head

¹⁶³ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Senkakunitodaisechikeshakanbuotaihou'. October 3, 1996, p.14.

¹⁶⁴ *The Japan Times*. 'The Senkakus are not for landing'. May 14, 1997, p.18.

office in Tokyo?¹⁶⁵ Perhaps this timely raid enabled the Japanese government to 'save face' by although not completing 'giving in' to Chinese government pressure, was still able to publicly threaten ultrarightists and subsequently send a message to Chinese critics that at least some action was being taken. Eventually in September 1997 talks commenced and foundations laid for future joint exploration of the area.

Conclusion

Japan's Senkaku policy was not greatly affected by the media or the public in Japan. However, there was some minor adjustment made. These shifts are impossible to attribute to one particular factor such as the impact of the press and domestic sentiment, which must have interacted with the government's economic imperative and a need social stability. The Japanese government clearly acted more aggressively in its willingness to defend the islands and repel Chinese protestors. Such shifts included the May 1997 decision to arrest foreign nationals landing on the islands, the decision to provide greater MSA support in the region, to settle a fishing agreement with the Taiwanese and finally to move towards a joint control zone with China in 1997. Forces behind the scenes such as economic consideration have also been working towards certain outcomes such as the need for the bilateral preservation of good relations as mentioned in the Japanese press.

During the two years 1996-1998, other events caused greater controversy than the dispute. The US defence treaty created tension and the Yasukuni Shrine visit more than anything caused intense protest which resulted in cancelling the second planned visit in October 1996. The process of influencing foreign policy, as discussed in Chapter One reveals that the Senkaku dispute was not important enough to warrant intense coverage that could lead to any major influence on foreign policy, particularly as Japan had control of the islands. However, a combination of events aroused even more the constant anti-Japanese sentiment in the Chinese territories, and Japan had to react to this sentiment. The actions of ultranationalist groups have been written off by the Japanese public and government as excessive and not as a result of mounting nationalist

¹⁶⁵ *The Japan Times*. 'Police raid rightists over illegal gun'. October 4, 1996, p.2.

sentiment in Japan as the Chinese claim. The Japanese government appears to be able to manipulate the media enough to downplay the events and maintain current policy.

The Senkaku dispute although a potential crisis situation for policymakers within the Japanese government, was not enough to greatly affect basic foreign policy. Although the Japanese government stood firm on its sovereignty claims, it acknowledged the need for bilateral stability and looked towards joint exploration with China. In order for the situation to escalate and policy to change dramatically, it would have taken extreme action from one side, which would have then jeopardised the prosperity of both. It was a combination of influences including the Yasukuni Shrine visit, nationalistic Japanese politicians and longstanding tension between the Japanese and Chinese governments that forced the Japanese government to carefully balance international diplomacy with a domestic show of resolve.

Traditional foreign policy determinants in Japan such as economic security and prosperity were not affected by the actions of 'heated' minority groups. On the contrary, they were being reinforced. Both governments were eager to seek peaceful resolution. Analysis of the Japanese press through the Senkaku dispute has suggested that in most cases in a liberal democratic society such as Japan, including a situation that involves a territorial dispute and nationalistic sentiment, basic government foreign policy is not affected significantly by the media or public opinion. Although policy shifts may occur as they did here, these can be attributed to a number of factors including the government's need to contain an issue, ensure economic stability and preserve bilateral harmony or to public sentiment and media coverage in China, rather than Japan itself.

3

Public Sentiment, The Media and Decision-Making on the Senkaku Dispute in China

The dispute over the Senkaku Islands has raised a number of serious issues for China. The Chinese government warned that anyone who 'dares' to take their territory will be 'cursed for centuries'.¹⁶⁶ There are few contests more inflammatory to the Chinese than a territorial claim. The dispute, according to the *Renminribao*, is an example of a 'militaristic' Japan 'again violating China's territory'.¹⁶⁷ This has created increased nationalistic rhetoric in China and tension between the two countries. The Chinese government must balance patriotic fervour with its reliance on Japan for investment and trade if it is to maintain economic progress. This struggle is combined with external pressure from arch rival Taiwan and Hong Kong, which are both challenging the Chinese government to act on the territorial dispute by claiming that, 'if China is thinking about national pride and sovereignty, there is no reason to be weak over the Diaoyus'.¹⁶⁸ This has placed the Chinese government in a compromising situation. How has sentiment both internal and external affected Beijing's policy stance?

This chapter examines the influence of public sentiment and the media over China's foreign policy with respect to the Senkaku dispute. The influence of public sentiment and the media in a country with China's political system is quite different in important ways from the influence they have on foreign policy in liberal democratic political systems such as Japan. In China's authoritarian system, the state seeks to exercise tight control over most aspects of a socialist society. In the previous chapter, the unique relationship between the Japanese media and the government was discussed, this chapter provides a contrast to the Japanese situation as the Chinese political character and press structure differs greatly from Japan. The nature and formation of Chinese policy is discussed along with the factors that may influence foreign policy. How do external and internal factors affect foreign policy formation in a closed regime?

¹⁶⁶ *Renminribao*. 'Ribenberganchunshi'. August 30, 1996, p.1.

¹⁶⁷ M. Forney, S. Moffett and G. Silverman. 'Ghosts of the past'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 10, 1996, p.24.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.24

This chapter analyses the coverage of the Senkaku dispute in three mainstream Chinese newspapers, two vernaculars and the leading English language paper, from July 1996 to June 1998, focusing on the most volatile months of protest activity and bilateral tension. Coverage commences with the 'Lighthouse Incident' in July 1996, which as mentioned earlier, created a 'lightning rod effect' by causing a new wave of anti-Japanese sentiment in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. This chapter also includes a special section addressing the Hong Kong factor, examining the unique role played by Hong Kong as a democratic window into freely expressed Chinese sentiment able to be voiced louder than on the Mainland with the potential to have affect Chinese foreign policy.

The Political Order in China

China represents one of the last bastions of a decaying order based on authoritarian government control. This control extends over the media, with policies previously based on an ideology declared to be the 'will' of the masses that supposedly reflected public sentiment. Socialism is dying and China has been 'left ideologically bereft by the global collapse of communism'.¹⁶⁹ The challenge now facing the regime is one of maintaining legitimacy, as China has progressively abandoned its traditional socialist ideology in favour of a set of ideas that gives primacy to market forces and private ownership. The government has been forced to pay close attention to managing public perceptions of what legitimates the Communist Party's hold on power. In turning to capitalism, the government has been able to rely on economic growth and personal enrichment of its population to maintain the legitimacy. In making this transition, the government has also been forced to play up feelings of patriotism because many in China have had to make substantial personal sacrifices. With the abandonment of socialism, many welfare benefits such as free universal education, free universal medical care and a livable pension for life have begun to disappear. With market oriented economic reforms, the ruling party's claim that 'China is a socialist country' are being 'increasingly undercut'.¹⁷⁰ At the same time, for the government to keep political support for

¹⁶⁹ N.Chanda and K.Huus. 'The new nationalism'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 9, 1995, p.20.

¹⁷⁰ E.S. Downs and P.C. Saunders. 'Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands'. *International Security*. Winter 1998, vol.23, no.3, p.117.

politically costly economic reforms, it cannot afford to be seen to be soft on issues such as sovereignty and territorial disputes.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) assumed rule after defeating the Nationalists in 1949 and achieved 'political unity in China for the first time in over a century'.¹⁷¹ The CCP's history has been marked by sudden shifts in what the acceptance of the 'party line' should be, and each shift has led to massive and brutal campaigns to enforce discipline behind the lines and eradicate opposing views. These campaigns of purification and eradication have caused constant unrest both amongst the ranks and within society and exposed any expression of sentiment that deviated from CCP policy to be vulnerable to incarceration, labour camps or death. Consequently, expression of opinion and dissent by any means including through the media is uncommon, as the Chinese public remembers the brutality shown to those expressing any form of opposition to the government.

Under the Chinese system, the population have had very little opportunity to be heard on issues of government policy. Although the economy is characterised by increasing capitalist tendencies and an open market, public impact on policy formation is greatly restricted by the government. However, the influence of democratic societies is giving the Chinese public previously unheard of scope for expression of behaviour both in and outside of the market place. Civil unrest and the expression of mass sentiment is now more based on economic uncertainty and social instability than the calls for democracy of a decade ago.

It was not until the death of Mao in 1976 that China began to work towards stabilising the chaos created by the Cultural Revolution and emerge from self imposed isolation. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping introduced a number of reformist policies that allowed the introduction of some market competition and focused on strengthening Chinese industries and a move away from isolationist policy. Although policy is still removed from both independent media influence and popular opinion, foreign relations with both developed Western countries and the rapidly developing nations of Asia, are

¹⁷¹ R.Taylor. *Greater China and Japan: prospects for an economic partnership in East Asia*. Routledge, London, 1997, p.2.

increasingly 'directed by economic imperative'.¹⁷² Chinese policy in the late 1990s is market oriented and focused on the development of Chinese power both economically and militarily. The ruling party increasingly has to justify diminished socialism with economic performance. As Taylor notes, the 'economic open door policy' of Deng Xiaoping and his successors has staked the CCP's political legitimacy not on 'Marxism-Leninism' but on its own capacity to 'improve the living standards' of the Chinese people as successful economic development equals political stability, and achieving this stability at home and abroad, particularly in Asia, is crucial.¹⁷³

Foreign policy in China is influenced by both internal and external factors such as economic security, prosperity, physical security, socialist ideology and even in a more indirect sense, by public sentiment. Until the death of Mao, the CCP based its right to rule on socialist ideology and nationalist tendencies in order to both 'mobilize support for threatened elites and to fend off potential challengers'.¹⁷⁴ The Communist's original claim to legitimacy was partly based upon its resistance to Japan and even now Japan continues to 'provide a useful target that allows Chinese leaders to define China's national identity in opposition to Japanese aggression and imperialism'.¹⁷⁵ However, this now complicates bilateral interaction as the CCP must justify to 'the people' increased interaction with Japan in not only trade but also cultural and political circles against widespread Chinese government inspired anti-Japanese rhetoric.

The changing political order has also affected public sentiment and although China continues to violate human rights and deal harshly with dissidents, 'it doesn't appear to be retreating from reform'.¹⁷⁶ The Chinese government see human rights in terms of 'national prosperity rather than individual well-being'.¹⁷⁷ Hence, the government's need to quash unfavourable expressions of sentiment and opinion is justified by the party as being 'for the greater good'. Despite the government's desire to avoid public

¹⁷² R. Taylor. *Greater China and Japan: prospects for an economic partnership in East Asia*. Routledge, London, 1997, p.2.

¹⁷³ R. Taylor. *Greater China and Japan: prospects for an economic partnership in East Asia*. Routledge, London, 1997, p.6

¹⁷⁴ E.S. Downs and P.C. Saunders. 'Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands'. *International Security*. Winter 1998, vol.23, no.3, p.114.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.119

¹⁷⁶ S.V. Lawrence. 'Beijing chill'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. January 14, 1999, p.12.

¹⁷⁷ R. Taylor. *Greater China and Japan: prospects for an economic partnership in East Asia*. Routledge, London, 1997, p.7.

confrontation, there have been major changes in China recently regarding freedom of speech and expression of sentiment, which will be discussed later.

Despite Chinese government efforts to control the media and the public, external factors continue to affect the 'untouchability' of Chinese foreign policy. These factors include China's emerging superpower status which is creating hegemonic concerns expressed by Asian neighbours fearing growing Chinese assertiveness on territorial claims.¹⁷⁸ With this new status, the CCP must placate the domestic audience affected by reform as it struggles with economic uncertainty, the collapse and closure of many state-owned enterprises and an end to the 'iron rice-bowl' era,¹⁷⁹ where communism ensured food for work.

Despite widespread changes, the media as declared by Chinese president Jiang Zemin, must remain 'firmly in the hands of our party'.¹⁸⁰ Although it is difficult to examine the effect of the media on policy in China as policy-makers often control media content, increased decentralisation of the media is creating a more liberal environment and a diversification of the media.¹⁸¹ Influential factors affecting policy in China include an uncertain society, which has emerged from persistent poverty, technological backwardness, pervasive economic inefficiency¹⁸² and isolation, to a society that has become one of the worlds largest and fastest growing economies, that despite thus far successful attempts at liberalisation, is plagued with 'economic uncertainty and popular dissatisfaction with official corruption'.¹⁸³

The Chinese public now has greater access to information and more opportunity to express opinion than ever before. This increased level of awareness of events continues to hinder Chinese government efforts to manipulate the dissemination of information and to control sentiment. The challenge to the regime is to maintain this course of openness and improve the regime's image as the country with 'the worst public relations

¹⁷⁸ N. Chanda and K. Huus. 'The new nationalism'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 9, 1995, p.20.

¹⁷⁹ G. White. *Riding the Tiger: The politics of economic reform in post-Mao China*. Stanford University Press, 1993, p.57.

¹⁸⁰ *Beijing Review*. 'Media to remain in hands of party'. February 12-18, 1996, p.6.

¹⁸¹ L. Jin. 'Baxianguo hai, meitijizhan'. *Huaxiawhenzhai*. March 1999 (internet).

¹⁸² G. White. *Riding the Tiger: The politics of economic reform in post-Mao China*. Stanford University Press, 1993, p.35.

¹⁸³ S. Lawrence. 'Beijing chill'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. January 14, 1999, p.12

sense of any major government in the world'.¹⁸⁴ This is to be done whilst simultaneously portraying to domestic audiences a nationalistic approach to the traditional ideological rival, the West, and to the Japanese. It is a common charge in Chinese media that the Japanese government have 'distorted the country's history, glorified its war of aggression and imbued its countrymen with a sense of militarism'.¹⁸⁵ Downs and Saunders note that contradictions exist between 'domestic appeals to nationalism and economic performance' as the government seeks to 'manipulate foreign and domestic perceptions', so that legitimacy based on economic performance and nationalism do not become 'unmanageable'.¹⁸⁶

The Media in Chinese Society

The Chinese media play a key role in the dissemination of communist party propaganda. After 1949, the press tightly controlled by the ruling party, continued to publish stories of communist heroes and anti-imperialist rhetoric, denounced enemies of the state and restricted information available to the public. In the mid-1950s a brief period of liberal thinking and expression was followed by the first of Mao's many brutal crackdowns on critics of the regime. This had an impact not only on the Chinese people's willingness to express opinion adverse to the regime, but also on the nature of the Chinese press.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the media forum was a playground for rival factions and manipulated by those in power to incriminate and destroy enemies. After the death of Mao, the four modernisations were initiated (industry, agriculture, science and technology and defence) and the media began to stabilise in the Party's hands after a decade of uncertainty. Attempts to gradually liberalise the press in the early 1980s were dealt harshly with during the 'anti-spiritual pollution' campaign launched in 1983, as directives from the central government in Beijing continued to dominate the Chinese media and the media was watched carefully as a government controlled group acted as the 'final arbiter on the line that media units must toe'.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ P. Gries. A 'China threat' Power and passion in Chinese 'Face Nationalism'. *World Affairs* 1999 (draft), p.7.

¹⁸⁵ *Beijing Review*. 'Japan: Don't do anything foolish'. September 23-29, 1996, p.7.

¹⁸⁶ E.S. Downs and P.C. Saunders. 'Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands'. *International Security*. Winter 1998, vol.23, no.3, p.121.

¹⁸⁷ W. Wop-lap Lam. 'The media: the party's throat and tongue defend the faith'. *China Review*. 1991, p.20.2.

Attempts by the media to liberalise were halted again by the CCP after the Tiananmen massacre in 1989, when once again press controls were tightened and *Xinhua* limited not only content but also the publication registration system. Publications were compelled to register with the government and publishing licences were issued at the strict discretion of the Party. One condition of receiving a licence was that all papers had to have a supervisory department attached to the superior government agency in charge which held the department accountable if there was a mistake.¹⁸⁸ If newspapers printed unfavourable material, licences were revoked and offending publications punished. The Chinese media was part of the government propaganda machine with its role as 'the throat and tongue of the party': 'Comrades' on the journalism front were instructed to 'serve socialism better' and reminded that their most important task was to make 'positive propaganda'.¹⁸⁹

The Chinese press is affected more by internal politics than the market pressures that influence liberal media societies such as Japan, as most newspapers are government-controlled and although editorial staff may have some say in placement and structure, it is ultimately *Xinhua* dominated material. Unlike newspaper content in democratic societies that can be influenced by a number of groups, Chinese newspaper content is mostly manipulated by the government. Although advertisers play a much larger role in the Chinese newspaper industry than ever before, they still have little say in content, particularly with the mainstream newspapers. Major newspapers are less affected by commercial consideration as government resources fund publishing together with state institutions (work units) that are forced to subscribe to many of the main newspapers, such as the *Renminribao*. With only government financial support, unlike some of their more independently financed counterparts in Taiwan and Hong Kong, Chinese newspapers are dependent on the government. This is justified by the government as it is party not profit control and is regarded as 'public service journalism' which is 'superior to capitalist journalism'.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ *Inside China mainland*. 'Beijing's hidden news control network'. July 1995, p.75.

¹⁸⁹ W. Wop-lap Lam. 'The media: the party's throat and tongue defend the faith'. *China Review*. 1991, p.20.5

¹⁹⁰ B. Womack (ed.). *Media and the Chinese Public: a survey of the Beijing media audience*. M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1986, p.11.

In China, the newspaper proprietor and dictator of editorial policy is usually the government. The only other potential influence on content is that of the editorial staff. In 1989, editorial staff from the *Renminribao* and other media workers, protested against the government with students and, 'marched down the streets of Beijing clamouring for a free press and a faster pace of reform'.¹⁹¹ Despite the harsh punishment inflicted on these protestors, editorial staff are still able to have some contribution in article placement through subtle suggestion. The ability of the editorial staff to influence content is however more possible with domestic rather than foreign issues. Foreign policy, especially towards superpowers is 'the least likely arena for open policy disagreement in the press'.¹⁹² It is one of the sensitive areas in which the government is least tolerant of dissent.

In China, the media does not affect government policy but is instead restrained by it as the politically sensitive nature of many issues ensures that important articles are carefully constructed. Although the editorial staff may have some say in article placement, important issues are placed in accordance with *Xinhua* (government) directives. Consequently, the media has little effect on policy in China and serves to mobilise the public to reinforce the actions of the regime. Traditionally the Chinese media has not been a forum for any debate or public disagreement as foreign policy related articles were regarded as 'obviously risky' and came from only one source- *Xinhua*.¹⁹³ However, despite the media still remaining under some CCP control, the last few years, particularly after Premier Zhu Rongji announced in 1997 that 'all enterprises should move towards the market economy,' a liberalising of the media has occurred and greater independent influence on press content which is more entertainment-based than ever before.¹⁹⁴ In the case of the Diaoyu dispute, the Chinese government's basic policy was reinforced by the state-controlled press with regular statements such as 'the Diaoyu Islands are sovereign Chinese territory is an indisputable fact,'¹⁹⁵ which appears in the opening sentences of most Senkaku related articles in the Chinese press. However indicators of slight change in the nature of the Chinese press were evident with subtle

¹⁹¹ W. Wop-lap Lam. 'The media: the party's throat and tongue defend the faith'. *China Review*. 1991, p.20.2.

¹⁹² W.Mills. 'Treatment of foreign policy issues in the regional Chinese press'. *Asian Survey*. Vol.xxi, no.7, July 1981, p.797.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.809.

¹⁹⁴ L. Jin. 'Baxianguo hai, meiti'. *Huaxiawenzhai*. March 1999 (internet).

¹⁹⁵ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Qianzeriben zhituqiangzhandiaoyudao'. August 31, 1996, p.4.

dissension on the level of policy aggressiveness amongst the newspapers which will be discussed later in the chapter.

China's Diaoyu (Senkaku) Policy

The Chinese government agreed initially with the Japanese government in the 1970s to 'shelve the issue' and allow 'future generations' to solve the dispute in the interests of good relations.¹⁹⁶ They have also insisted however that both 'historically and legally' the islands belong to them.¹⁹⁷ From soon after the 'Lighthouse Incident', the Chinese government insisted that the Japanese had 'violated Chinese sovereign territory' and that the Japanese government must 'promptly take measures to ensure harm (to Sino-Japanese relations) is not done'.¹⁹⁸ The Chinese have declared that they are willing to solve the dispute by way of friendly discussion, provided it was mutually accepted that 'the islands belong to China'.¹⁹⁹ The Chinese position on the dispute was according to the *Jiefangjunbao* 'firm and unshakeable',²⁰⁰ and newspaper articles constantly reiterated this point aggressively. As the *Renminribao* declared:

No Chinese will surrender the country's territory and sovereignty to anyone.
If anybody dares do so, he will be cursed for centuries.²⁰¹

From the beginning of the new round of dispute related tensions in July 1996, the Chinese stood firm and assertive on their position.

The CCP's policy on the islands, like the LDP's, has been firm and unwavering. Since the first voices of dissent were expressed in 1972, the Chinese government have insisted on their right to island sovereignty. However, like their Japanese counterparts, the Chinese government through media outlets have also constantly reaffirmed the need for bilateral stability. Although there has been an aggressive attitude displayed by the Chinese government, the state-media has been carefully utilised. Domestic anger has been addressed in the press through 'the usual vitriol about Japanese militarism and the

¹⁹⁶ 'Troubled waters'. *The Economist*. October 12, 1996, p.30.

¹⁹⁷ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Waijiaobufayanrenkaijizhewen'. July 25, 1996, p.4.

¹⁹⁸ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Waijiaobufayanrendajizhewen'. July 19, 1996, p.4.

¹⁹⁹ *Renminribao*. 'Waijiaobufayandajizhewen'. July 25, 1996, p.4.

²⁰⁰ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Wowaijiaobuxiangrifangtichuxiongliekangyi'. September 12, 1996, p.1.

²⁰¹ *Renminribao*. 'Ribenieganchunshi'. August 30, 1996, p.1.

country's history of atrocities in China'.²⁰² However, it also has revealed that public sentiment in a authoritarian society can be a potential threat to the regime if the issue is volatile enough. Has this been the case with the Senkaku dispute?

Japan, as China's largest trade partner,²⁰³ is considered carefully in the formation of Chinese foreign policy as the Chinese government is aware of the high levels of Japanese investment, foreign aid and trade with China. After the Tianamen Massacre in June 1989, Japan 'more rapidly returned to economic cooperation with China...than did Western countries'.²⁰⁴ Taylor notes that 'views of Japan loom large in Chinese policy thinking' and that the Chinese government have stated that political and economic cooperation with Japan are vital to not only 'mutual prosperity' but also to the 'peace and development of the region as a whole'.²⁰⁵ Although both countries acknowledge the importance of bilateral relations, the Senkaku dispute complicated these relations and stirred volatile issues in China such as sovereignty and nationalism.

The Chinese government has maintained its appearance as aggressive and anti-Japanese, declaring that there is 'no arguing the Chinese position' regarding ownership of the islands.²⁰⁶ Chinese foreign policy is more affected by internal politics than in democratic nations as policy is made in the supposed best interests of the public and dissension is not tolerated. Greatly improved economic conditions in China have enabled the government to justify relations with previous 'enemies of the people' such as Japan. However, the anti-Japanese sentiment was continually reinforced by the Chinese government, using 'propaganda campaigns, exhibits depicting Japanese wartime atrocities, and anniversaries of past Japanese acts of aggression to exploit these popular feelings'.²⁰⁷

²⁰² M. Forney, S. Moffett and G. Silverman. 'Ghosts of the past'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 10, 1996, p.24.

²⁰³ W. Hui. 'Political tension may hurt trade ties'. *The China Daily*. October 18, 1996, p.4.

²⁰⁴ R. Taylor. *Greater China and Japan: prospects for an economic partnership in East Asia*. Routledge, London, 1997, p.7

²⁰⁵ R. Taylor. *Greater China and Japan: prospects for an economic partnership in East Asia*. Routledge, London, 1997, p.5

²⁰⁶ *Renminribao*. 'Waijiaobufayandajizhewen'. July 25, 1996, p.4.

²⁰⁷ E.S. Downs and P.C. Saunders. 'Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands'. *International Security*. Winter 1998, vol.23, no.3, p.119.

Public Sentiment in China

Sentiment in China is tightly mobilised or suppressed by the regime. The government is aware of the diversity of groups, opinion and sentiment within Chinese society as with the world's largest population of 1.2 billion, the ruling party is careful not to let disruptive diversity in opinion threaten internal stability. With 55 minority groups, a widening poverty gap, centuries old divisions between North and South, and increasing differences between the development of flourishing coastal cities and stagnating inland towns, China is full of uncertainty and the ruling elite increasingly struggles to keep sentiment tightly controlled.

The expression of Chinese public sentiment over the last half-century has had an oppressive history. Mao invited public comment on his newly formed government in the mid-1950s with the 'Hundred Flowers Campaign'. The campaign initially encouraged intellectuals to offer constructive criticism about the new communist government half a decade after it came to power. However, this was followed by a vicious turning on those who contributed and spoke out against government corruption and incompetence as many of those who criticised were imprisoned or killed. This resulted in an even greater restraining of public expression and was followed a decade later by the 'Ten Bad Years' and the 'turbulence' of the Cultural Revolution which crippled the country.²⁰⁸ Millions of innocent lives suffered and were lost during the turmoil, which resulted in a brutal precedent against the expression of any form of public dissent.

Despite the opening of Chinese doors to the ideas, technologies and structures of democratic and developed nations, the legacy of this brutality left most of the Chinese public in fear of voicing dissent. Human rights abuses still plague the regime's record and sentiment that opposes government policy is not tolerated and harshly dealt with. This history has set a precedent in China, where people realise that to voice independent opinion means severe punishment. This legacy remains and the expression of sentiment in China is still monitored by the government as indicated recently as relatives of those

²⁰⁸ S.E.M. Charlton. *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China and Japan*. Westview Press, Colorado, 1997, pp. 158,198.

killed in the Tiananmen Massacre were carefully monitored during the 10th anniversary of the crackdown.²⁰⁹

Despite numerous demonstrations and intense media coverage in Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Chinese public had little opportunity to express opinion and demonstrate. Protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan were scarcely mentioned in China for fear of similar acts erupting: 'Beijing's refusal to bow to pressure on China's campuses for students to stage similar demonstrations was seen as an indication the Government was not confident it could control the direction of large scale protests'.²¹⁰ The Chinese government prohibited any public display of Diaoyu backlash and anti-Japanese demonstration. Although the *Yomiuri* noted the 'restraining' of a small planned demonstration in Beijing,²¹¹ this was an exception and the Chinese public were kept quiet. Bitter memories of the last mass expression of sentiment and its bloody resolution have plagued the CCP since 1989. Liberal reform and greater freedom of speech that emerged in the 1980s was quickly repressed after Tiananmen. The 'clamp down' caused a severe 'narrowing of outlets for divergent voices'. Mass opinion continued to be informed by a range of news sources that 'reinforce accepted dogma and politico-cultural stereotypes'.²¹²

Despite authoritarian government control in China, the expression of public opinion still poses a threat to the ruling elite, as over the last few years, the collapse and closure of many state owned enterprises has created much civil unrest and even resulted in large-scale anti-government protests in some cities. The lead up to the Hong Kong Handover was also unsettling for the government as Muslim separatists exploded a bomb in central Beijing and riots occurred in North West in early 1997.²¹³ Over the last few years, despite limited coverage in the Chinese media, China has been experiencing increasing unrest and public demonstrations by disgruntled state workers. The expression of public opinion in China tightly controlled, is potentially explosive and cause for much government concern as Chinese society remains unstable in the face of reform and change.

²⁰⁹ CNN Online Network. June 5, 1999.

²¹⁰ L. O'Donnell. 'China blue'. *The Weekend Australian*. May 15-16, 1999, p.26.

²¹¹ *Yomiuri Shimbun*. 'Senkaku shotomawaritainichikougikoudai'. September 14, 1996, p.5.

²¹² G. Barme'. 'To screw foreigners is patriotic: China's avant-garde nationalists'. *The China Journal*. No.34, July 1995, p.214.

The Chinese government is concerned about expressions of sentiment and has responded harshly to protests, as the country experiences social, economic and political changes as government control becomes less centralised, indicated recently with the province of Sichuan gaining semi-autonomous status in 1997. Despite such changes, the Chinese government through the media claims to represent the collective sentiment of all Chinese people as the state-controlled press constantly uses unifying words and speaks on behalf of 'the people'.²¹⁴ The newspapers claim in articles that 'this is what the Chinese people think', or 'this is what the Chinese people want'. Articles from all Chinese newspapers after Nishimura's landing proclaimed, 'We (the Chinese) express strong indignation and protest'.²¹⁵ Such typical commentary reveals the nature of the Chinese press as a 'mouthpiece for the government'.²¹⁶ Despite civil unrest and dissension throughout China, the media continues to portray a harmonious and prosperous society with a people unified in sentiment.

Despite of authoritarian government control, sentiment in China poses a threat to the stability of the regime. China's instability and the government's constant struggle to balance a dying ideology with a rapidly developing economy is inhibited by the threat of large-scale expressed sentiment disagreeing with Chinese government policy. To avoid this, the government must take certain measures such as refusing permission to demonstrate, deal harshly with dissidents, and spy on potential 'trouble-makers'. Some public opinion was voiced regarding the dispute but was suppressed by the government. In the summer of 1996, students used the university's e-mail system to spread related information that the government had not released and challenged the CCP for 'not being tough enough'. The Chinese government responded by denying web access to university students for ten days and one activist was 'banished' to the inland province of Qinghai.²¹⁷

²¹³ 'Xinjiang Killings'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. May 8, 1997, p.13.

²¹⁴ *The China Daily*. 'Diaoyu intrusions protested'. September 12, 1996, p.1.

²¹⁵ *Jiefangjunribao*. 'Wobiaoshiqiangleriefenkaihekangyi'. May 7, 1997, p.1.

²¹⁶ *Inside China Mainland*. October 1995, p.70.

²¹⁷ P.Gries. A 'China threat' Power and passion in Chinese 'Face Nationalism'. *World Affairs* 1999 (draft), p.8.

The presence of existing and 'widely resonating'²¹⁸ anti-Japanese sentiment combined with the territorial dispute caused concern for the Chinese government. The Chinese government feared mass expression of anti-Japanese sentiment with memories of a government supported protest against the Japanese in 1985 that turned into an attack on the Chinese government's policies.²¹⁹ Another Chinese government concern is that excessive anti-Japanese sentiment could have a negative impact on invaluable Japanese investment and trade relations. As Austin and Thomas note: 'China desperately needs Japan as an economic partner'²²⁰ and China could not afford to let the relationship be adversely affected by the dispute.

Media-Sentiment-Policy Relationship in China

In China, the media-sentiment-policy relationship is easier to define than in democratic societies such as Japan. Despite China's slow road to liberalisation and the public's greater access to outside information, the CCP still controls the official media and acts to suppress unfavourable sentiment. The formation of Chinese foreign policy operates in a tightly controlled environment. The media as a carefully manipulated extension of the state, plays no prominent role in policy making; instead it feeds the people with propaganda to support its policies and praises the 'greatness' of China and the Communist Party. Japan's attempt to control the Senkaku Islands and its 'wanton trampling of China's sovereignty' was 'condemned by the Chinese government and the Chinese media'.²²¹ The Chinese government, regarding issues of nationalism tightly controls the role of the media.

The May 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, has provided a recent example of the CCP's continued manipulation of the press. Despite NATO leaders and US President Bill Clinton apologising for the bombing, these apologies were deliberately withheld from the Chinese press for 48 hours.²²² This indicated the media's role in China of propagating support for the regime. The delay in publishing NATO apologies served to reinforce anti-US public sentiment that the Chinese government

²¹⁸ E.S. Downs and P.C. Saunders. 'Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands'. *International Security*. Winter 1998, vol.23, no.3, p.119.

²¹⁹ H.Arai. 'Angry at China? Slam Japan'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 3, 1996, p.21.

²²⁰ G.Austin and M.Thomas. 'Has geo-economics redefined sovereignty in the East China Sea?' *The Asia-Pacific Magazine*. No.13, December 1998, p.31.

²²¹ *The China Daily*. 'Right-wingers snipe at China's title to Diaoyus'. September 2, 1996, p.4.

wanted to be publicly expressed. The NATO incident was carefully used by the Chinese government to manipulate the media and focus on the bombing without news of apologies in order to mobilise anti-US sentiment amongst the Chinese people. This is an example of the regime's ability to use the media to mobilise and pacify sentiment. Senkaku coverage in the Chinese press was also carefully manipulated as the dispute was kept low key and a lack of information to the public helped ensure it would cause little controversy in China.

The Chinese media publishes carefully and often omits potentially volatile information. The dispute's only fatality, the drowning of Hong Kong activist David Chan, went largely unreported on the Mainland. Apart from *The China Daily* and one 'smallish' newspaper, 'television newscasters completely ignored it' and newspapers instead, 'dished up the usual vitriol about Japanese militarism and the country's history of atrocities in China'.²²³ The Chinese government's efforts to mostly ignore the incident reflected underlying concerns that despite anti-Japanese rhetoric being a key part of the regimes nationalist image, the dispute was not worth jeopardising relations and a contained domestic audience was vital.

Despite the controls and restrictions in China, the three-way relationship between foreign policy, the media and the public is slowly changing and is increasingly affected by both internal and external factors. The change is a move away from total government control to increasing liberalisation. The influence of the international community is playing a major role in these changes as pressure from democratic governments and human rights groups around the world have contributed to a more open Chinese society. The Chinese people now have greater public access to information through the internet, foreign radio broadcasts, satellite television, and external news sources have forced the CCP to accept less control over the flow of information into China.

The increased information flow has also contributed to a rise in different organisations. Despite authoritarianism being a 'dominant feature of the political system', the emergence of new political ideas and organisations is a partial by-product of the

²²² L. O'Donnell. 'China blue'. *The Weekend Australian*. May 15-16, 1999, p.26.

²²³ M. Forney, S. Moffett and G. Silverman. 'Ghosts of the past'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 10, 1996, p.24.

'profound changes occurring' in China and the political, economic and administrative reforms taking place.²²⁴ However, this is occurring as civil unrest rises, 'with people angry about corruption and workers uneasy about their jobs'²²⁵ as disillusionment in Party ideology spreads. As societal disharmony emerges, the Chinese government is increasingly called upon to justify its rule. In the dispute, a challenge to the government's patriotism was made by the Chinese public and the people in Hong Kong as the Chinese government refused to take affirmative action against the Japanese despite calls to do so. The dilemma of creating foreign policy that appeases both an international and domestic audience is reflected in media coverage of the dispute.

Newspaper Analysis in China after the Lighthouse Incident

The Chinese state-controlled press, compared to its counterparts in Hong Kong and Japan, had limited dispute coverage and articles that contributed little to an understanding of related events and the actual nature and progression of the dispute as editorial opinion and government propaganda were usually the same pieces of rhetoric. The government agenda appeared to keep the incident low key yet still acted in a manner to sufficient to appear to defy the Japanese in line with nationalistic rhetoric for the domestic audience. From the three newspapers, over a two-year period only 51 articles were published, less than one third that appeared in the three Japanese newspapers.

Articles in the Chinese press were limited but direct, and attacked not only Japan's territorial claims but also constantly 'dished up' the 'usual vitriol' against Japan, including war crimes and militarism,²²⁶ as even the Yasukuni Shrine visitation received more media attention than the Senkaku dispute. Most articles reiterated the Chinese government's position and only made passing reference to the latest dispute related events. The *Renminribao* published the most articles (20) over the two-year period, *The China Daily* published 19 and the *Jiefangjunbao* only 13.

²²⁴ S.E.M. Charlton. *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China and Japan*. Westview Press, Colorado, 1997, p.289.

²²⁵ M. Forney, S. Sakamaki. and S. Jae Hoon. 'Mute point'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. August 15, 1996, p.21.

Renminribao (The People's Daily)

The *Renminribao* published a total of 20 related articles over the period, only one more than *The China Daily*, but almost double the number in the *Liberation Daily*. Despite the 'Lighthouse Incident' occurring on July 14th 1996, nothing was mentioned until July 19th. The article quoted the Chinese Foreign Ministry which condemned the act as a 'violation of China's sovereignty' and called on the Japanese government to 'promptly take measures to avoid bilateral harm and soothe the situation'.²²⁷ The newspaper also included a full-page article on the issue of 'Diaoyu ownership'. The article explained in detail historically and legally why the islands 'rightfully belong to China'. Although the article also referred to the Japanese government's argument, the focus was on why the activities of the Japanese rightists were 'illegal' and 'violated Chinese sovereignty'.²²⁸

After the Japanese politician Nishimura landed on the islands in May 1997, the *Renminribao* published two separate articles in the one edition. The first article appeared on page four in the *yaowen* (important news) section, the other in the international news section on page six. The first article attacked the Japanese government and ultrarightists and protested strongly against the 'illegal landing'. The second article, two pages later, commended the Japanese government's criticism of Nishimura.²²⁹ The paper also published a small article in May 1997 about an ex-Japanese prime minister's criticism of Nishimura's landing on the island.²³⁰ This was a criticism that did not appear in the mainstream Japanese newspapers. The most aggressive article appeared as an editorial on page-one, entitled 'Japan don't do anything foolish'.²³¹ The article declared that 'Japan has used the changes after the Cold War to show it's power and test the resolve of China over the islands'.

The *Renminribao* also included two references to articles in the Japanese liberal newspaper, the *Asahi*. The first was an editorial that appeared in September 1996 (also in the *Jiefangjunbao*), that called on the Japanese Prime Minister to 'not cause harm to

²²⁶ M. Forney, S. Moffett and G. Silverman. 'Ghosts of the past'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 10, 1996, p.24.

²²⁷ *Renminribao*. 'Waijiaobufayanrendajizhewen'. July 19, 1996, p.4.

²²⁸ *Renminribao*. 'Lundiaoyudaozhuqianguishu'. October 18, 1996, p.8

²²⁹ *Renminribao*. 'Ribengouhui...Riguohuiyiyuan'. May 7, 1997, pp. 4,6.

²³⁰ *Renminribao*. 'Dagouhuiyiyuandengdiaoyudao'. May 20, 1997, p.6.

²³¹ *Renminribao*. 'Ribenberganchunshi'. August 30, 1996, p.1.

Sino-Japanese relations' and claimed that Hashimoto 'must do two things,' firstly think of a way to 'clearly express the damage caused by the ultrarightists by building the lighthouse', and secondly that 'during his term of office as prime minister, not to visit the Yasukuni Shrine again'.²³² The second appeared in May 1997, which criticised the Japanese government after Nishimura's landing, for failing to prevent it and continuing to 'harm relations with China'.²³³ In May 1997, five articles were published, and in June-July 1998 only one. The articles contained headlines considerably less aggressive than in 1996 and as mentioned above, included comments from Japanese officials condemning rightist actions, suggesting that some policy adjustment had taken place.

Jiefangjunbao (Liberation Army Daily)

From July 1996 until the end of October, only ten articles were published in the *Jiefangjunbao*. In May 1997, only two appeared in the paper, and none in June-July of 1998. Although the articles in the *Jiefangjunbao* were mostly identical to those published in the *Renminribao* and also appeared on the same day there were some slight differences. The dispute gained front-page status four times in the *Jiefangjunbao*, as opposed to the *Renminribao*, which although publishing related articles, only had two on the front page. Both papers had scathing anti-Japanese front-page articles on 30 August. The following day, another front-page article appeared in the *Liberation Daily* whilst the *Peoples' Daily* article appeared on page three. This suggested a slightly more aggressive attitude from the military and is an example of increased permissible opinion diversity within mainstream Chinese society. In contrast to the *Peoples' Daily* front-page editorial on 30 August, the *Jiefangjunbao*, carried a heading claiming 'The Japanese have created a disturbance on our Diaoyu Islands'. The article condemned the Japanese for 'ignoring China's solemn position', and 'seriously violating China's sovereign territory'. The article continued on to declare that the ultrarightists acted 'under the connivance of the Japanese government'.²³⁴

After Nishimura's landing, the condemnation of his act by the Japanese Prime Minister and the government was given coverage. The article stated that the incident was 'extremely regrettable' but that 'it should not harm overall relations between Japan and

²³² *Renminribao*. 'Yaoqiuqiaobenwushirizhongguanxierhua'. September 17, 1996, p.6.

²³³ *Renminribao*. 'Rixinglunpingxicunbeihairizhongguanxidaju'. May 8, 1997, p.6.

²³⁴ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Ribenzaiwodiaoyudaozhizaoshiduanlingrenfenkai'. August 30, 1996, p.1.

China, which are important for both regional and world harmony and prosperity'.²³⁵ Although the article claimed the landings to be illegal and still referred to the islands as 'ours', the content showed support for the actions of the Japanese government and revealed some mutual government agreement on which antagonists were to blame.

The China Daily

From July 1996 until the end of October, *The China Daily* contained only 19 articles on the dispute. This was almost the same number as in the leading vernacular publication, the *Renminribao*. However, it is only half the number carried by its Japanese equivalent, *The Japan Times*. Although the dispute was treated cautiously by all newspapers in China, with an international audience, *The China Daily* was more sensationalist with 'appeals' to an international readership. Commenting on the Chinese government's use of the English language publications in China, Gries notes:

Lengthy English language articles in the *China Daily* and *Beijing Review* also made the case for Chinese sovereignty over the Islands. Their purpose, however, was likely twofold: to marshal western opinion against Japan, and, probably more importantly, to assuage domestic critics by appearing to champion Chinese nationalism internationally.²³⁶

As China strives to gain greater acceptance in the world, its English language propaganda on international issues such as territorial disputes becomes increasingly important.

Although *The China Daily* contained similar anti-Japanese 'vitriol' to the vernacular press, it was able to comment more widely on events and was the only mainstream newspaper to mention Chan's drowning. As in the vernacular press, the activities of Chinese protestors, from any of the three Chinese states, was scarcely mentioned. The main emphasis was on the stance of the Chinese government and the usual anti-Japanese propaganda accusing Japan in one article of 'embarking on the road to confrontation'.²³⁷

After the heightened tensions of 1996, *The China Daily* also appeared less aggressive in 1997 and 1998. In May 1997 only two articles appeared, compared to five in the *Renminribao*. In June-July 1998 only two were published and despite the alleged

²³⁵ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Ribenshumingyiyuanfeifadengshangwodiaoyudao'. May 7, 1997, p.5.

²³⁶ P.Gries. 'China's Occident: The 'Japanese devils', the 'war of resistance', and the Diaoyu Islands'. Chapter Four (draft), p.28.

sinking of the Taiwanese protest vessel, only two articles commented on the incident. The dispute despite the dramatic collision of vessels, appeared to be less volatile than in 1996.

Effect on Diaoyu Policy in China

Chinese media coverage of the dispute was considerably low profile. The Chinese newspapers made little reference to the protests taking place over the border in Hong Kong or across the Strait in Taiwan. The only reference to these protests appeared in the *Renminribao* in June 1998 when it was reported that a Japanese ship had 'destroyed' a Taiwanese boat. The article was not focused on the Taiwanese protest but on the damage caused by the Japanese to the Taiwanese ship.²³⁸ Unlike *The China Daily* which clearly stated the boat had been sunk, the *Renminribao* declared that much damage had been done but not that the boat had necessarily been sunk.

The Chinese government through the press, constantly reminded the Japanese that it was solely to blame for bilateral problems. The Chinese government claimed regularly that the Japanese were harming bilateral relations and that Japan should 'make greater efforts to maintain peace and prosperity in Asia'.²³⁹ Despite this, the Chinese have done little more than threaten. Calls from Taiwan and Hong Kong for the Chinese government to 'protect Chinese territory' were responded to by empty threats by a Chinese government. The closest act of aggression from China was the flying of two Su-27 fighters over the island's air space in August 1995.²⁴⁰ However since the dispute escalated in July 1996, no such further action took place. In mid 1996 according to the Japanese *Yomiuri Shimbun*,²⁴¹ the Chinese government dispatched two submarines into the area. However, this was not reported in the Chinese press, but rather in the Japanese press. Why was a perceivably strong act carried out by the Chinese government not followed up with nationalistic rhetoric? The aggressive rhetoric of the Chinese government appears to have been nothing more than a means to address the domestic

²³⁷ *The China Daily*. 'Diaoyu intrusions protested'. September 12, 1996, p.1.

²³⁸ *The China Daily*. Concern at sinking of ship. June 26, 1998, p.1.

²³⁹ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Ribenshumingyiyuanfeifadengshangwodiaoyudao'. May 7, 1997, p.5.

²⁴⁰ B. Gilley, S. Moffett, J. Baum and M. Forney. 'Rocks of contention'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. September 1996, p.15.

²⁴¹ *Yomiuri Shimbun*. 'Senkakushuhennisensuikan'. August 12, 1996, p.4.

audience and 'to champion Chinese nationalism internationally'. The Chinese newspapers have reflected this policy of defiance without action.

All three Chinese newspapers heavily emphasised the Japanese government's relations with the ultrarightists and insisted that the Japanese group had built the lighthouse and acted under the 'connivance of the Japanese government'.²⁴² The Chinese newspapers made constant reference to the Japanese 'violation of Chinese sovereign territory', and the 'indignation felt by the Chinese people'. Most of the articles started with: 'the islands have belonged to China since ancient times'. The Senkaku related articles revealed the depth of the media-state relationship and reinforced the view that the Chinese press is a mere instrument of the state.

The Chinese newspapers also used the dispute to condemn other Japanese actions. These included the Yasukuni Shrine visit and the US-Japan defence treaty, both of which according to the *Renminribao*, made relations with Japan 'difficult'.²⁴³ The Senkaku dispute was often discussed together with the Japanese government's denial of Nanjing massacre statistics, war atrocities and Japanese school textbook omissions, confirming that the Chinese government use the past as a, 'convenient tool to skilfully manipulate Japan'.²⁴⁴ This dispute has been no exception, with newspapers on the Mainland portraying China once again, as being the victim of a 'militant Japan'. Such articles continued to expose the depth of anti-Japanese sentiment which, despite its regular appearance in the press, was forbidden on the streets.

The Chinese newspapers printed provocative headings and constantly used 'ours' when referring to the islands. They press also used 'our' when referring to the 'indignation suffered' by the Chinese people and were continually 'championing' the cause for 'the people'. The *Jiefangjunbao* contained a map of the islands and the surrounding area, labelling the map 'Our country's territory'.²⁴⁵ Other article headlines included, 'Our Foreign Ministry protests strongly...',²⁴⁶ 'We will not shift our position...'²⁴⁷ and 'We

²⁴² *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Ribenzaiwodiaoyudaozhizaoshiduanlingrenfenkai'. August 30, 1996, p.1.

²⁴³ *Renminribao*. 'Zailishijiaoxunjichushangjiaqiangrzhongguanxi'. September 19, 1996, p.6.

²⁴⁴ H. Ijiri in P.Gries. 'China's Occident: The 'Japanese devils', the 'war of resistance', and the Diaoyu Islands'. Chapter Four (draft), p.1.

²⁴⁵ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Diaoyudaoliedaoshizhongguoguyoulingtu'. August 30, 1996, p.4.

²⁴⁶ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Wowaiquobuxiangrifangtichuqiangliiekangyi'. September 12, 1996, p.1.

²⁴⁷ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Woduidiaoyudaoyongyouzhuquandejuexinhaobudongyao'. October 4, 1996 p.4

express indignation and protest'.²⁴⁸ The Chinese newspapers expressed to 'the people' that this was a complete affront to the Chinese people.

There were some slight differences between the *Renminribao* and the *Jiefangjunbao*. In contrast to the *Jiefangjunbao*, the *Renminribao* contained less all-inclusive headlines such as language regarding the dispute. On 7 May, in contrast to the *Liberation Daily's* claim that 'we' feel indignation, the *Renminribao* stated that 'China feels indignation' regarding the Nishimura incident. The *Renminribao* published the news on page four in contrast to the *Jiefangjunbao* which carried a front-page article, stressing that 'we' feel the indignation. The use of 'us' (as in 'we' the Chinese) is a common style of propaganda in China, which is another example of the regime claiming to represent the collective interests and sentiment of the people. The differences between the two newspapers although slight, reflected significant changes in the nature of the Chinese media from a united front of propaganda to a place of slowly appearing variance of foreign policy opinion, revealing changes in the Chinese press towards a more liberal entity.

All three Chinese newspapers contained articles about a Japanese historian supporting the Chinese claim. Kiyoshi Inoue first published his paper 'The Tiaoyu Islands (Senkaku Islands) and other islands are China's territory', in the February 1972 edition of the *Japan-China Cultural Exchange*. After the 'Lighthouse Incident' in 1996, another edition of the publication was released with a new preface that reiterated that 'the islands belong to China'. The new edition also included a condemnation of the ultrarightist 'Lighthouse Incident'.²⁴⁹ This, like most articles in the Chinese press, were part of an argument the Chinese government was trying to make, to justify wresting the islands from the Japanese.

Media observation revealed slight policy adjustment in China. The style of reporting in Chinese newspapers changed gradually from July 1996 when headlines were based on announcements from the Foreign Affairs Bureau on incidents that had taken place.²⁵⁰ By late August, headlines were condemning the Japanese openly on behalf of all Chinese

²⁴⁸ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Wobiaoshiqianglefenkaihekangyi'. May 7, 1997, p.1.

²⁴⁹ *Jiefangjunbao*. 'Diaoyudaoshizhongguolingturiyilishixuejiatzhichu'. October 19, 1996, p.4 & *Renminribao*. 'Diaoyudaoshizhongguoguyoulingtu'. October 19, 1996, p.3.

²⁵⁰ *Renminribao*. 'Waijiaobufayanhuijizhewen'. July 19, 1996, p.4.

people expressing 'indignation' and that 'Chinese sovereign territory had been gravely violated'.²⁵¹ In September 1997, China and Japan agreed to a joint control zone in the East China Sea. This 'effectively broke the deadlock on what status to give the islands in a future delimitation'.²⁵² This was reflected indirectly by a reversion back to less emotive headlines when the next confrontation around the islands took place. In June 1998 the 'ramming' of a Taiwanese protest boat by a Japanese MSA ship was reported with a headline that had reverted once again to being a Foreign Affairs Bureau Announcement.²⁵³ By this time, the two governments were moving closer to a joint settlement and wanting the issue resolved.

Articles published in the Chinese vernacular press, just after the 'Lighthouse Incident' in mid-July, noted as previously mentioned, that 'friendly discussions' to resolve the issue could take place conditionally, if China's sovereignty was to be agreed upon. By late August according to the *Renminribao*, that had become 'that the issue must be shelved or joint exploration would only be acceptable if China has sovereignty'.²⁵⁴ Obstacles to joint settlement eventually faded as the Chinese realised economic imperatives outweighed any domestic nationalist benefit that could be gained from conflict with Japan. As Downs and Saunders reinforce:

The Chinese government proved willing to incur significant damage to its nationalist credentials by following restrained policies and cooperating with the Japanese government to prevent the territorial disputes from harming bilateral relations. When forced to choose, Chinese leaders pursued economic development at the expense of nationalist goals.²⁵⁵

Despite heated rhetoric, the Chinese government acknowledged the need to stabilise bilateral relations and opted for long term economic gain in preference to a short-term show of domestic rhetoric which was reflected in the Chinese government's policy adjustment.

²⁵¹ *Renminribao*. 'Rizaiwodiaoyudaozhizaoshiduanqinfanzhongguolingtulingrenfenkai'. August 30, 1996, p.6.

²⁵² G. Austin and M. Thomas. 'Has geo-economics redefined sovereignty in the East China Sea?' *The Asia-Pacific Magazine*. No.13, December 1998, p.33.

²⁵³ *Renminribao*. 'Waijioabufayanrenfabiaopinglun'. June 26, 1998, p.4.

²⁵⁴ *Renminribao*. 'Ribenieganchunshi'. August 30, 1996, p.1.

²⁵⁵ E.S. Downs and P.C. Saunders. 'Legitimacy and the limits of nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands'. *International Security*. Winter 1998, vol.23, no.3, p.117.

The Hong Kong Factor

China is under international scrutiny with its dealings in Hong Kong and overt restraints on freedom of speech and press restrictions would be detrimental to the international image of the Chinese government. Hong Kong must focus on its own economic concerns and continue good relations with important trading partner Japan, which will also benefit China. The Chinese government will pay increasing attention to the people of Hong Kong who provide China with its most successful bilateral link to the international community. The expression of heated sentiment against Japan and even China is cause for concern and policy adjustments will take place to avoid this.

The burning Japanese flags²⁵⁶ and severed Chinese heads²⁵⁷ on the pages of one of Hong Kong's most respected newspapers, *Mingpao*, reflected the intense coverage given to the dispute by the Hong Kong media. Without any independent foreign policy and since 1997 centrally controlled by Beijing, Hong Kong is included within the present discussion of China. The dispute created much interest in Hong Kong which was further excited by dramatic press coverage. With no local foreign policy to influence and no independent Senkaku policy, the media and public sentiment in Hong Kong created concern for the Chinese government. Examining Hong Kong provides some insight into general Chinese public opinion that is not permitted expression in China. How did this indirect influence caused the Chinese government to react? How did the authoritarian regime respond to the unusual situation in Hong Kong, whereby people under central jurisdiction were able to protest relatively freely and openly challenge Beijing's Senkaku policy?

This section briefly comments on the Hong Kong media and two of its major newspapers, the *Mingpao* and the *South China Morning Post*. Unlike the Chinese public, the people and media in Hong Kong represented an overt and active form of pressure on the Chinese government. Under British rule, Hong Kong has been a bustling economy where escaped dissidents from China, entrepreneurs, film-makers, writers and journalists have all been able to express themselves. Unlike their communist

²⁵⁶ *Mingpao*. 'Gangbaodiao zhitotaiyangqi'. May 13, 1997, p.A3.

²⁵⁷ *Mingpao*. 'Ribenyoudashou mashinzhuliushehui'. May 12, 1997, p.A18.

neighbours, people in Hong Kong live in a free consumer society where the media in particular, has provided professional comment and opinion on a variety of issues both domestic and international.

Until mid-1997 Hong Kong existed under British rule with relative freedom to express sentiment and publish newspapers in a market environment. As a bastion of democracy in a region of strict regimes, Hong Kong has prospered economically and behind Japan is the most liberal society in Asia. The democratically elected Hong Kong Legislative Council has been the main ruling body on the island with the Governor acting as the Queen's representative and unofficial Head of State. Although Hong Kong is without independent policy, the city still has bilateral relations with other countries based on open market policy and international standards. This has enabled Hong Kong successful diplomatic and trade relations with other nations, including Japan which are quite separate from the often tense bilateral ties China has with these countries. Japan as a key trading partner has always been important to Hong Kong and tension between China and Japan has often been avoided by Hong Kong.

Until the handover to Chinese rule in 1997, the British largely determined Hong Kong foreign policy. After the handover, Beijing has controlled policy and despite now being under communist rule, according to the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed by the British and the Chinese in 1984, Hong Kong's system is to remain 'basically unchanged' for a period of 50 years.²⁵⁸ The economic success of Hong Kong has contributed to relative harmony since World War II, despite the decades of turbulence in neighbouring communist China. Since the handover, despite some economic downturn and wariness of communist interference, Hong Kong has been allowed to maintain a relatively free society and continues to govern itself in all areas except foreign affairs and defence and it 'appears to be working'.²⁵⁹

Hong Kong is proud of its vernacular press that provides a complete range of opinion from pro- to anti-communist, international, liberal and conservative, English language newspapers of international reputation and a number of colourful tabloid style papers. Despite a return to communist China, Hong Kong is still trying to preserve a free press

²⁵⁸ B. Gilley. 'Tightening the bolts'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. April 25, 1996, p.16.

²⁵⁹ F.Ching. 'Hong Kong: a lack of spine?'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. January 14, 1999, p.30.

which with an increasingly competitive market, is also affected by the need for exciting copy. As in Japan, four groups; proprietors, the government, editorial staff and advertisers, can influence media content in Hong Kong. In most cases, as financially independent groups in a relatively liberal society, despite some wariness of Beijing, Hong Kong newspapers publish freely in accordance with their respective policies.

Due to recent economic difficulties however, newspapers in Hong Kong have become even greater prey to market forces. As noted in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the biggest threat to media freedom after the handover is not China but falling ethical standards of local reporting, 'when survival becomes the dominant concern, market considerations outweigh all'.²⁶⁰ As mentioned in Chapter One, in such a competitive environment, stories are often prioritised in order of excitement value including sex and violence. The Senkaku dispute provided newspapers in Hong Kong with ample copy of popular stories related to old foe Japan and drama on the 'high seas'²⁶¹ which are sensitive issues in Hong Kong, as it still remembers Japanese war atrocities and is increasingly vulnerable after the handover to the CCP's rhetoric. However, since the handover, media credibility in Hong Kong has declined and an increase in sensationalist journalism has led to the 'public's low opinion' of the media in contrast to its 'elevated status' in the years leading up to the handover.²⁶² Hence, the intensity of media coverage of the dispute may partly be related to the dispute providing newspapers with material that sells.

Public sentiment in Hong Kong has been relatively freely expressed. The absence of communist style oppression and the maintenance of the previous liberal system, has enabled the public to preserve the right to protest and express sentiment. General harmony and a good living standard have contributed to minimal domestic strife in Hong Kong under British rule. People in Hong Kong have been able to express sentiment and have often used this freedom to demonstrate peacefully, marking anniversaries and other special events. Since the handover, demonstrations have thus far been allowed to continue although with some caution. The recent remembering of the 10th anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre in June 1999, despite being subdued in

²⁶⁰ F.Ching. 'Learning self control'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. December 17, 1998, p.24.

²⁶¹ *Mingpao* (from *The China Post*). 'Dapengmingshirifangbianlunzhuquanyilou'. May 28, 1997, p.A2.

²⁶² F.Ching. 'Learning self control'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. December 17, 1998, p.24.

Beijing, was marked by a candlelight vigil in Hong Kong's Victoria Park, attended by seventy thousand people, 'each with their own stories to tell'.²⁶³ Such a display of sentiment reminds the Chinese government that the Hong Kong public still express opinion publicly and if the matter is important enough, in large numbers.

Sentiment in Hong Kong is widely expressed and consists of a number of groups all expressing their opinions with varying intentions, resources, publicity and level of influence. Tensions over the Senkakus heightened and protests intensified in the lead up to the sovereignty handover in mid-1997. Anti-Japanese sentiment was evident in Hong Kong and although the dispute provided attractive news, underlying elements suggested that such fervour was greatly contributed to by 'handover anxiety', and 'people's frustration towards Beijing,' as well as 'some residents wanting to show their patriotism to the Chinese government' before July 1997. Japan was regarded as an 'easy target' to vent anger at because of its 'history of aggression' and 'some of its bumbling diplomatic performances'.²⁶⁴

As mentioned earlier, an article in the *Mainichi* reported on comments by a radio journalist in Hong Kong who questioned the money 'wasted' on the Diaoyu campaign, which could have been used for other things such as a 'children's hospital'. Blame for the drowning incident was also placed on the press by a Hong Kong politician who claimed that the 'Hong Kong media were largely responsible' for the death.²⁶⁵ Although the motives behind the intense Diaoyu campaign in Hong Kong were questioned, the local support received and the extent of mobilised sentiment and expression of interest was a clear threat to the bilateral harmony important to both the Chinese and Japanese governments.

The media-sentiment-policy relationship in Hong Kong is defined by a media sensitive to its audience and the various interest groups in Hong Kong as the press provides both opinion and entertainment to a large readership. As information flow increases between China and Hong Kong, the Chinese public are increasingly informed of activity and events outside China, more so than ever before. Does the expression of sentiment in

²⁶³ *Mingpao* (internet). 'Niannianciyehuguangweizheng'. June 5, 1999.

²⁶⁴ H. Arai. 'Angry at China? Slam Japan'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. October 3, 1996, p.21.

²⁶⁵ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Seihounihenkangoenofuan'. October 15, 1996, p.4.

Hong Kong, particularly on issues important to many Chinese such as nationalism and sovereignty affect the public and government in China?

Newspapers in Hong Kong provided readers much coverage of the dispute. In May 1997, one of the leading newspapers and non-party publications,²⁶⁶ *Mingpao* published 28 articles which included two editorials, one banner headline and two full-page spreads on the dispute. Most coverage was in the form of at least a half page with large pictures and provocative headlines. One of the editorials was entitled 'Japan causes dispute to escalate',²⁶⁷ the other editorial was entitled 'The threat of Japanese militarism escalates, Chinese tolerance means islands can't be defended'. The editorial attacked China and stated that 'China should not be silent and that something should be done'.²⁶⁸ The banner headline on May 27 after Chinese protest groups tried unsuccessfully to land on the islands, was 'Japanese MSA vessel violently obstructs, *Baodiao* (Protect the Diaoyu) ship fails to land'.²⁶⁹ Hong Kong newspaper attacks on Japan and the ultrarightists were often reported with references to Japanese war atrocities, militarism and even comfort women.²⁷⁰ The Senkaku dispute provided the Hong Kong media with an opportunity to publish anti-Japanese rhetoric popular amongst readers.

The *South China Morning Post* (*SCMP*) in the same month contained only seven Senkaku related articles. This included a page one article, an editorial and a cartoon. The *SCMP* of international repute, provided commentary much less emotive and anti-Japanese than the vernacular press. The audience of the *SCMP* is an international expatriate community, more likely to be concerned with international events than anti-Japanese war stories. In late May the *SCMP* published a cartoon which pictured a race starter complete with racing gun near the Senkaku Islands, reminding boats from Japan facing boats from Hong Kong and Taiwan (noticeably not China) that 'safety comes first'.²⁷¹ In June 1998, the *SCMP* published an editorial after the collision between a

²⁶⁶ G. Wang and S. Wong (eds). *Hong Kong in the Asia-Pacific Region: rising to the new challenges*. Hong Kong Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1997, p.70.

²⁶⁷ *Mingpao*. 'Nihontiaoxinshengjibaodiaozhiluxianjun'. May 7, 1997, p.A2.

²⁶⁸ *Mingpao*. 'Ribenwulixiemashengjizhongguorenrangdiaodaonanbao'. May 27, 1997, p.A3.

²⁶⁹ *Mingpao*. 'Rijianzubaolanzhubaodiaochuanqiangtanshibei'. May 27, 1997, p.1.

²⁷⁰ *Mingpao*. 'Zhushutuitanghunagjunxulunrenhe'. May 12, 1997, p.A18.

²⁷¹ *South China Morning Post*. 'Comment'. May 26, 1997, p.20.

Taiwanese protest vessel and an MSA ship, calling for crew members to consider 'finally agreeing to what has become an annual fiasco'.²⁷²

Japanese newspaper articles made considerable comment on the heated nature of the Hong Kong press reports. Dispute related titles included 'Get Lost Japan' and 'Chinese Citizens are angry'.²⁷³ The *Mainichi* article also reported the 'development of competitive info gathering' amongst the Hong Kong media, suggesting that Hong Kong reports were based less on genuine concern and objective opinion and more on sensationalism which catered to the readership in a competitive Hong Kong market for which the Senkaku dispute provided entertaining and provocative newspaper stories.

The Hong Kong press was the most provocative of the three regions regarding the dispute. Articles criticised Japan, promoted local protests²⁷⁴ and challenged the Chinese government's inactivity with representatives from the Hong Kong Democratic Party appealing to Chinese government representatives at the *Xinhua* offices in Hong Kong for the Chinese government to take a stronger stance on the dispute.²⁷⁵ The Hong Kong press also blamed China for Japan's 'repeated' actions that violated Chinese sovereignty.²⁷⁶ However, although no policy change can take place in Hong Kong, a slight shift was noted in China as joint settlement was eventually discussed. The heated nature of Hong Kong sentiment included, flag burning, demonstrations outside a local Japanese school, a call to boycott Japanese goods and a consulate sit-in.²⁷⁷ These actions reminded the Chinese government that such sentiment if fuelled would be harmful to Sino-Japanese ties as Japanese tourist numbers to Hong Kong decreased in late 1996 at the height of Senkaku tension and anti-Japanese protests in Hong Kong.²⁷⁸

The resolution and eventual calming of dispute tension and related protests were clearly expressed in a *South China Morning Post* editorial. The editorial stated in late June 1998 that, 'It is time for the participants to accept that territorial disputes are settled at the negotiating table,' and that 'a breakthrough on thorny bilateral questions is more

²⁷² *South China Morning Post*. 'Futile gesture'. June 25, 1998, p.16.

²⁷³ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Hongkongminshuhagayochou'. September 8, 1996, p.7.

²⁷⁴ *Mingpao*. 'Baodiaohuiluxingkangyirifandiaodao'. May 12, 1997, p.3.

²⁷⁵ *Mainichi Shimbun*. 'Hongkongminshuhagayochou'. September 8, 1996, p.7.

²⁷⁶ *Mingpao*. 'Zhongguozenribenluzaidiaodaogaoshi'. May 27, 1997, p.A3.

²⁷⁷ *Mingpao*. 'Sanrenjianrilingguanfeifashuhuizuicheng'. May 13, 1997, p.A3.

²⁷⁸ *The Japan Times*. 'Japanese shun Hong Kong'. October 12, 1996, p.3.

likely to be achieved in a calm atmosphere than by confrontations'. Emphasis was placed on both countries needing to focus on economic concerns and continue the work of recent years to 'increase trade and establish friendlier relations'.²⁷⁹ The editorial questioned the value of risking lives and whether the protests had become counter-productive. Clearly economic objectives and awareness in China of pressing socio-economic needs had contributed to resolution and a decline in tension and rhetoric.

Hong Kong protests were a reminder to the CCP that despite the need to balance domestic nationalism and bilateral harmony, the excessive stirring of Chinese nationalism could cause problems. Hong Kong also revealed to the Chinese government the potential harm that could result from anti-Japanese sentiment and the tension it could create for bilateral stability vital to the maintenance of important economic and political ties. Even without independent policy, protest activity and a sensational media in Hong Kong had some effect on the Chinese government. The slight shift in the Senkaku policy of the Chinese government reflected economic imperatives and the need to pacify volatile sentiment in Hong Kong and a media with sensationalist tendencies.

Conclusion

Despite efforts by the Chinese government to control the press and restrict sentiment, there has been some shift of China's policy towards the Senkakus. The influence is not from sentiment expressed or media hype, but on what is not expressed and what is not printed. The difficulties faced by the present Chinese government are also exposed in the dispute. The government is trying to balance the needs of a country emerging from a strong socialist ideological background with an international community that China needs to cooperate with in order to develop as the 'strong demands of economics' underpin the 'fiery rhetoric of nationalism' that the Chinese government has used as a cornerstone of legitimacy for many years.²⁸⁰ The dilemma faced by the CCP is continuing development and maintaining legitimacy through nationalist propaganda.

²⁷⁹ *South China Morning Post*. 'Futile gesture'. June 25, 1998, p.16.

²⁸⁰ N. Chanda and K. Huus. 'The new nationalism'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. November 9, 1995, p.22.

The Chinese media does not have much effect on foreign policy as it is a government instrument of propaganda. It is more likely however that public sentiment, brooding and suppressed, may have an effect on policy. Chinese government relations with the Japanese government are precarious with the constant threat of demonstrated anti-Japanese sentiment leading to sentiment hostile to the Chinese government. The media fuels domestic dislike of the Japanese, but the government is aware of the need to maintain good relations with Japan as an invaluable investor and trading partner.

Despite an absence of protests, the threat of excessive and volatile Chinese public sentiment has had some effect on policy. This has not changed the Chinese government's basic policy on the islands but it has seen the government downplay the event. This was even more pronounced after headway was made in late 1997 towards joint settlement. Government policy, due to widespread anti-Japanese feelings, must suppress public opposition and restrict information. However, this must be balanced with the usual display of nationalistic rhetoric. In order to do this, the government must take certain measures such as refusing permission to demonstrate against the Japanese, deal harshly with antagonists, and spy on potential 'trouble-makers'. This in itself is a response to sentiment.

Changes in government attitudes to select expressions of sentiment have occurred since the prohibiting of large-scale Senkaku protests during the dispute in 1996, China has recently allowed government condoned protests in Beijing. The recent May 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade led to large government condoned anti-US/NATO protests in China: 'The Chinese authorities were quick to encourage the student's nationalism to gain political mileage from the nation's genuine sorrow'.²⁸¹ This has represented a shift in policy as the government appears less threatened by large gatherings and has displayed an increased confidence in dealing with such mass expressions of opinion.

The use of the Senkaku dispute by the Chinese government to stir anti-Japanese sentiment through nationalist rhetoric was cautious. Newspaper articles although few, were aggressive and citing Japanese actions as offensive to all Chinese. Strong protests in Taiwan and as mentioned above, Hong Kong, combined with local repressed anti-

Japanese feelings were potentially explosive on the Mainland. Despite threatening a 'curse' against anyone taking Chinese territory, the Chinese eventually chose economic priorities and minimised local anti-Japanese sentiment. The public in China and their diversity of living conditions, needs and opinions, are a constant reminder to the CCP that caution must be exhibited when forming policy and trying to use volatile public sentiment to legitimise leadership. Even in an authoritarian regime such as China, sentiment has the potential to affect policy if the threat is large enough. It was in the case of the Senkaku dispute.

²⁸¹ L. O'Donnell. 'China blue'. *The Weekend Australian*. May 15-16, 1999, p.26.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the influence of media and public sentiment on the foreign policy of China and Japan in the case of the Senkaku Islands dispute. The dispute has involved a number of sensitive issues such as nationalism, territorial sovereignty, as well as political and economic consideration which have all impacted on 'Senkaku policy'. The question of the influence of the media and public opinion on foreign policy has been widely researched although most focus has been on liberal democratic societies. This paper focuses on two Asian countries, Japan and China, one democratic and the other an authoritarian regime which recently took control of a region with liberal traditions, opinion and a press more akin to a liberal democracy than its host. The inclusion of Hong Kong provides insight into freely expressed Chinese sentiment regarding the dispute which was restricted in China by the government.

The relationship between the media, public sentiment and foreign policy is determined by the individual political system in each country. The level of influence the media and public sentiment have over foreign policy has been the subject of much debate over the last few decades, particularly since the media coverage of the Vietnam War and the controversy that ensued. The level of influence is also affected by the type of policy and the general nature of public sentiment. Domestic policy with greater relevance to everyday living, receives more media coverage and is more susceptible to external influences compared to the distant and often protected foreign policies of a government. Public sentiment is rarely united and usually consists of a diversity of views often with divergent interests. Consequently, governments can usually proceed with foreign policy formation relatively unhindered by the media or the public by contrast with domestic policy.

Despite the media being a prominent entity in society, its ability to influence foreign policy is inhibited by a number of factors. These include the often conflicting interests in media content by proprietors, editorial staff, advertisers and the government. The impact an event may have on government policy is also determined by the timing of the incident, the type of policy, the media outlet and the nature of the event itself. All these

factors are considered along with the structure of the media in liberal democratic societies such as Japan and Hong Kong which is influenced greatly by the market place, as newspapers are increasingly forced to respond to audience tastes and sacrifice professional standards in order to entertain and avoid the loss of readership.

Looking at the media from China, Japan, and Hong Kong to a lesser extent, I have examined newspapers as one outlet from which information on government policy can be obtained and as a source of expression of selected public sentiment. This research commenced with the 'Lighthouse Incident' in July 1996 which reignited the Senkaku issue, and concluded in June 1998 when the most recent incident took place. During that time, external sources talked of a potential military clash as tensions peaked after the October 1996 landing of Chinese protestors on the islands. The dispute evolved from heated exchanges between both government and protesters in mid-1996, to an opening for resolution through joint exploration talks in September 1997 and slight but clear policy adjustment in both China and Japan.

The basic Japanese government policy regarding the islands did not change. Already in possession of the islands the Japanese government maintained that the islands legally and historically belonged to them and therefore that they had the right to defend them. In mid-1996 the Japanese government did little to appease Chinese popular anger by not punishing or preventing nationalist activity. However, apart from the actions of Japanese ultranationalists, expression of public sentiment towards the dispute was minimal in Japan. Media coverage was also relatively subdued as Japanese newspapers provided objective updates and reported official comments about the dispute. Although the Japanese press appeared professional in their coverage, slight differences emerged in the editorial opinion and bias of these newspapers.

The pro-government *Yomiuri* contributed little to the debate and was without the intense rhetoric of its Chinese counterpart the *Renminribao*. However, the *Yomiuri* did indicate subtly through the careful use of select words such as 'territorial waters' that it supported the government's policy of territorial sovereignty. The liberal *Mainichi* also showed support for Japanese government policy with the use of the term 'territorial waters' but it also provided objective comment and some criticism of the Japanese government's initial refusal to respond to Japanese ultranationalists and ease tensions

with an increasingly angry Chinese government. The English language *Japan Times* provided its international readership with objective commentary and open debate on the dispute and the Japanese government's handling of the controversy. The impact of the media and public opinion on government policy in Japan was affected by external events such as defence relations with the US and tensions related to existing Chinese attitudes towards Japan's wartime history.

By 1998 slight policy changes had occurred in Japan as the Japanese government showed a significant escalation in their resolve to defend the islands from Chinese protestors. The number of MSA vessels were increased and the government declared it would arrest illegal foreign national trespassers. The Japanese government also started to condemn ultrarightist activity in Japan and agreed to a joint control zone of nearby waters with the Chinese government as bilateral tension subsided considerably. Despite some slight alterations to Japanese policy, foreign policy in Japan is carefully insulated and influential determinants do not usually include the media and public sentiment. Although Japanese media analysis provided some insight into the nature of sentiment and the press in Japan, there was no indication that either factor had any major influence on the Senkaku policy of the Japanese government. Instead, Senkaku policy formation in Japan was based on economic security and prosperity and policy adjustments were a response to tension threatening bilateral stability and valued economic relations with China.

The fundamental Senkaku policy of the Chinese government was based on the governments 'unwavering' insistence that the islands belonged to them. Although this basic policy did not change, policy adjustment did occur despite the efforts of an authoritarian regime to insulate themselves from influence by controlling the media and public sentiment. Despite an absence of overt public sentiment on the islands in China and the government restricting media coverage of the dispute, policy in China was more affected by sentiment than in Japan as the Chinese government sought to defuse anti-Japanese sentiment. Chinese policy shifted from agreeing to 'shelve the issue' to offering joint settlement provided Japan acquiesced to 'Chinese sovereignty' and finally to talks with Japan on a joint control zone of the area. The Chinese government was adamant in the press about the 'strength' of Chinese conviction, the 'anger' of the Chinese people towards the Japanese government and the 'indignation' felt by the

Chinese people as Japanese ultranationalists appeared to act with the 'connivance' of the Japanese government. Although disallowing demonstrative expressions of public sentiment in China, Chinese news reports were aggressive and provocative and aggravated existing anti-Japanese sentiment.

In Hong Kong the media and protest groups were also aggressive and provocative in their condemnation of the Japanese government, ultrarightists and even the Chinese government for their failure to act decisively against the Japanese who continued to 'violate' Chinese sovereignty. Public sentiment was clearly expressed with wide-scale assaults on the islands, consulate demonstrations, rallies, protests at a local Japanese school and even a call to boycott Japanese goods. These actions were given much coverage by the local media showing support for the anti-Japanese sentiment expressed by the Hong Kong public. As Japanese tourist numbers showed a decline in Hong Kong in late 1996, it appeared to the Chinese government that future rhetoric or actions to fuel existing and 'widely resonating' Japanese hatred would be detrimental and costly to crucial economic relations with Japan at a time when a struggling Chinese economy needed Japan. The threat to vital economic support and trade with Japan scared the Chinese government into downplaying their state-controlled media rhetoric and shifting policy slightly to accommodate economic priority over nationalistic sentiment.

In China, media coverage decreased in intense rhetoric and even contained praise of the Japanese governments more decisive actions towards the ultrarightists without commenting on the Japanese governments increased defence and resolve to protect the islands. The Chinese government also agreed to consider joint exploration and appeared to move away from insisting that the Japanese must agree to Chinese sovereignty in order for the two countries to proceed with joint activities. As reflected in the media, the Chinese had clearly taken a step back and away from aggressive rhetoric and started to downplay the dispute. Observation of the Chinese media also revealed slight changes in the nature of the Chinese press as slight differences in editorial opinion appeared between the *Renminribao* and the *Jiefangjunbao*. In Hong Kong, although the media continued to condemn the 'unpatriotic' Chinese government and provide anti-Japanese rhetoric, challenges were made by the Hong Kong media to the value of costly and damaging protest exercises.

The media and public sentiment generally does not have much influence over foreign policy except in exceptional circumstances. The 'Lighthouse Incident' revealed that there are intense provocateurs out there posing a threat, but it would take more than Japanese ultranationalists landing on their own islands and even the death of a Hong Kong activist to have an impact on foreign policy. The governments did not change their fundamental stance but did make adjustments particularly in China where the government acted to defuse anti-Japanese sentiment. Foreign policy is generally too well insulated and removed from the people to be affected by either the public or the media in major ways.

Although policy shifts made by the Chinese government were slight, evidence gathered through the press suggests that Chinese public sentiment as expressed in Hong Kong and less obviously in the rest of China, combined with the influence of the Hong Kong media to affect policy. In Japan, policy was less influenced by the media and sentiment despite Japan being an open and democratic liberal society.

Influence over foreign policy by public sentiment and the media can take place but only in exceptional circumstances as underlying elements over time can reveal to the government a need for some change. Policy adjustment if made gradually, can still enable the government to appear to be in control while catering to domestic influence, even in an authoritarian regime. The Chinese government driven by fear of an escalation in harmful anti-Japanese sentiment expressed most threateningly by the public and press in Hong Kong, adjusted policy as a response to calls by the Chinese public that the Chinese government was not protecting Chinese sovereignty against the 'hated' Japanese. Despite the controversy caused by the dispute, the nature remained 'small in scale' and 'local in nature' as both governments acted to ultimately preserve important bilateral relations. Policy adjustment did occur and although sentiment in China did have some impact, these adjustments were made on the need to avoid a small-scale problem affecting an important larger picture.

Regardless of the political nature of a country, in order for the media and public sentiment to have a major influence on foreign policy, the issue must do more than just create a 'lightning rod effect'. The issue must be one that most of the public feel strongly about and are willing to protest against in a focused manner over an extended

period of time. Anti-Japanese sentiment in China is intense, shared by the majority of the Chinese people and has existed for some time. Although such circumstances are rare, it is this depth of sentiment that can create concern for policymakers and is able to penetrate and have an effect on the insulated domain of foreign policy.

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