



DF-26 anti-ship
ballistic missiles of
the PLA (Beijing,
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Chapter 2

China

The Xi Administration's Accelerating Hardline Stance due to COVID-19

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Summary

The explosive outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Wuhan, Hubei Province infected and killed many people and fueled economic stagnation, bringing to the fore the public's dissatisfaction with the Xi Jinping leadership. In response, the Xi government sought to resume economic activities and at the same time tighten control over society to weather the situation. President Xi further expanded his political authority following the fifth plenary session of the 19th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee.

As it tightened its control, the Xi leadership directed its hardline stance also at Hong Kong and Taiwan. In Hong Kong, the Xi government imposed the Hong Kong national security law, hollowed out "one country, two systems" that promised a high degree of autonomy to Hong Kong, and used force to silence the Hong Kong people's calls for freedom and democracy. In Taiwan, President Tsai Ing-wen who rejects the "One China" principle demanded by China was reelected, and Taiwan's successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic elevated its reputation in the international community. In addition, the United States strengthened its relations with Taiwan by sending high-ranking government officials and selling many weapons to the island. China responded with strong intimidation tactics, stepping up military drills in waters and the airspace around Taiwan.

The Xi government took a hardline stance toward other countries as well. While relations between China and the United States had already been deteriorating, criticism of each other intensified over responsibility for the pandemic, raising the level of U.S.-China confrontations to that of "New Cold War." China's hardline diplomatic stance was also directed at Australia and India, increasing the alarm of many countries, including European countries, toward China.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) played a role in promoting vaccine development and providing assistance to countries, along with sending medical personnel and transporting medical supplies. At the same time, the PLA ramped up exercises in the South China Sea, including firing anti-ship ballistic missiles, and strengthened vessel forays into the Pacific with a view to countering the U.S. Forces. Furthermore, China put more pressure on Japan, intensifying the activities of China Coast Guard (CCG) vessels in the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, an inherent territory of Japan, and approaching Japanese fishing vessels in Japanese territorial waters.

1. The Xi Government's Heightened Anxiety amidst COVID-19

(1) The Regime Draws Increasing Criticism due to the Pandemic

The year 2020 started out with a nightmare for China. In January, there was an explosive outbreak of COVID-19 centered in Wuhan, Hubei Province. It not only spread across China but also triggered a pandemic globally in Asia, Europe, America, and other parts of the world. In China, more than 96,600 people were infected, and the death toll exceeded 4,700 as of the end of 2020,¹ leaving a devastating impact on Chinese society. As discussed later, the global spread of the coronavirus also led to a deterioration in China's relations with the United States and other Western industrialized countries.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan, President Xi Jinping instructed relevant departments on January 20 to focus efforts on curbing infection and release information on infections in a timely manner. On the same day, Premier Li Keqiang held a State Council executive meeting, where the following was announced: relevant departments would study countermeasures; the Wuhan municipal government would enforce quarantine measures; efforts would be made for the treatment of patients and prevention of infection among healthcare workers; information would be released appropriately; and research on the virus would be bolstered. On January 23, the Xi government decided to effectively seal off Wuhan by suspending all public transportation connecting the city to other parts of the country and prohibiting people from entering or leaving Wuhan. Nonetheless, COVID-19 cases surged through mid-February under the city's lockdown, and the number of deaths increased correspondingly. According to an official announcement of the Wuhan municipal government, there were 49,122 cases and 2,195 deaths as of the end of February.²

As the epidemiological situation in Wuhan became more serious and the virus spread to other cities including Beijing, the people became increasingly dissatisfied with the COVID-19 responses taken by local governments and

the Xi Jinping leadership. Local authorities were particularly criticized for not taking immediate measures despite confirming cases of pneumonia caused by COVID-19, and even trying to conceal this information. According to an official announcement of the Chinese government, the Wuhan municipal government had

confirmed cases of viral pneumonia of unknown cause as of December 27, 2019.³ However, the municipal government did not take proactive measures to prevent infection and failed to disseminate accurate information on the epidemiological situation by January 20, when President Xi Jinping gave his instructions. In addition, it was discovered that the public security authorities of Wuhan had issued a reprimand against a doctor who posted a message on social media, warning about the spread of pneumonia due to COVID-19. Dr. Li Wenliang of the Central Hospital of Wuhan learned about the several cases of pneumonia caused by COVID-19 in Wuhan and posted a message on WeChat on December 30, 2019 to alert fellow doctors. In response, the Wuhan Public Security Bureau summoned Dr. Li to a police station on January 3, 2020 for spreading false rumors and made him sign a letter of admonition.

Later, this fact came to light, and on February 7, Dr. Li died after contracting COVID-19. Following his death, an outpouring of condolences for Dr. Li and severe criticism of the authorities' cover-up circulated primarily on the Internet. "I think there should be more than one voice in a healthy society," Dr. Li is said to have stated before his death.⁴ It brought to the fore dissatisfaction with the strict control of speech by the CCP government. A letter signed by hundreds of university professors, lawyers, and others was disclosed; it advocated that the



"送别李文亮!" [Farewell Li Wenliang!] is written in snow to mourn the death of Li Wenliang (Beijing, February 2020) (Kyodo News)

spread of pneumonia due to COVID-19 was a man-made disaster resulting from restrictions on free speech.⁵ With criticism rising, the Xi government announced that the National Supervisory Commission would investigate Wuhan's response to Dr. Li. The findings of the investigation, released on March 19, concluded that the Wuhan Public Security Bureau's reprimand against Dr. Li was unjustified and called on the Wuhan municipal government to withdraw the reprimand and hold those involved accountable.⁶ On April 2, the Hubei provincial government announced its decision to confer Dr. Li the title of "advanced individual" and designate him a martyr for his sacrifice in dealing with COVID-19.⁷

Furthermore, the worsening of the pandemic prompted calls for President Xi to be held responsible. In early February, Professor Xu Zhanrun of Tsinghua University published an article criticizing that the tighter control of speech by the Xi government blocked out society's warnings against the growing epidemic and resulted in the spread of COVID-19. Professor Xu strongly criticized the concentration of power in the hands of the "Leader." He called for achieving freedom of speech by ending state control of the press and monitoring of the Internet, and for respecting the political rights of the people, including holding universal suffrage.⁸ Ren Zhiqiang, a prominent businessman whose father was a senior official of the CCP during the revolutionary era, followed suit by publishing an essay in late February. Ren ridiculed President Xi for concentrating power in his hands, likening him to an emperor clinging to power, and criticized that the "emperor's" disregard for the interests of the people was a factor in the spread of COVID-19. He stressed that freedom of speech must be established in China and hoped that a movement for reform emerges from within the CCP.⁹

The spread of COVID-19 took a heavy toll on the Chinese economy. With people's movements restricted, consumption fell sharply, factories shut down, and retail stores and restaurants ceased operations. Due to the significant economic slowdown in society, China's economic growth rate in the first quarter of 2020 decreased 6.8% year-on-year. This, in turn, has put at risk the achievement of China's vision to "comprehensively build a moderately

prosperous society" by doubling the gross domestic product (GDP) in 10 years and eliminating absolute poverty—targets for 2020 that were widely touted by the Xi Jinping leadership. Overall, the explosive outbreak of COVID-19 in China has undermined President Xi's political authority, raised society's doubts over the one-party rule of the CCP, and stalled economic growth, presenting a major threat to President Xi and his leadership.

(2) The Xi Leadership's Attempt to Regain Control

With his grip on power under threat, President Xi Jinping began to take actions in February to turn the situation around. On February 10, President Xi visited Anhuali Community and Capital Medical University Hospital in Beijing to provide on-site guidance for the first time since the pandemic became serious. On January 25, the CCP established the leading group of the CCP Central Committee on the response to the novel coronavirus outbreak, and Premier Li Keqiang was appointed as its head. On January 27, Premier Li visited Wuhan to offer encouragement to healthcare workers who were treating patients at hospitals and to give instructions on infection control. Since then, Premier Li frequently presided over meetings of the leading group and remained at the forefront of the response to COVID-19. On the other hand, President Xi rarely demonstrated initiative in tackling COVID-19, raising criticism over his lack of proactive actions. It is thought that President Xi provided on-site guidance in an attempt to counter these criticisms, albeit the disease being under control in Beijing.

The Xi Jinping leadership successively ousted those who were in charge in Hubei Province and Wuhan, which bore the brunt of the COVID-19 cases. The director of the Hubei Province Health Commission was dismissed on February 11. Jiang Chaoliang, secretary of the CCP Hubei Provincial Committee, and Ma Guoqiang, secretary of the CCP Wuhan Municipal Committee, were dismissed on February 13. It is believed that these dismissals were made to alleviate local residents' dissatisfaction that heightened due to the pandemic. They were also aimed at blaming the inadequate COVID-19 countermeasures on local

governments to deflect criticism away from President Xi and his leadership. Jiang Chaoliang was replaced by Shanghai mayor Ying Yong, who had worked under President Xi when he was secretary of the CCP Zhejiang Provincial Committee. This appointment simultaneously strengthened President Xi's political influence in Hubei Province.

Alongside preventing the spread of COVID-19, President Xi began to put emphasis on resuming economic activities. During his on-site guidance in Beijing, President Xi noted, "We need to make greater efforts to raise the level of economic activities, minimize the impact of the epidemic on the economy, and reach this year's goals and tasks of economic and social development," stressing, "The resumption of operations and production by enterprises and businesses should be actively promoted." In his remarks at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee held on February 12, President Xi underscored "striving to achieve this year's economic and social development goals and tasks." Based on these remarks, the Standing Committee meeting indicated that China would endeavor to minimize the impact of COVID-19, maintain stable economic performance and social stability, and realize the goals and tasks set by the CCP Central Committee.¹⁰ In quickly resuming economic activities, President Xi's aim was likely to restore and strengthen his damaged political authority by overcoming the economic downturn and achieving his economic targets.

Furthermore, President Xi began to assert his leadership in combatting COVID-19. The February 16 issue of the CCP theoretical journal, *Qiushi*, published the full text of the speech by General Secretary Xi at the February 3 meeting of the Standing Committee. At the outset, General Secretary Xi reportedly stated, "When I presided over the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee on January 7 after the outbreak of COVID-19 pneumonia in Wuhan, I issued instructions on responding to the pneumonia."¹¹ President Xi stressed that he had given instructions on tackling COVID-19 almost two weeks before January 20, when he was thought to have given his first instructions. At the meeting of the Standing Committee

held on February 21, General Secretary Xi noted that he had personally directed the work and made arrangements for the measures to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.¹² It was emphasized on various occasions thereafter that President Xi "personally directed" the response to COVID-19.

At a meeting held on February 23, President Xi stated, "I have been giving unremitting attention to controlling COVID-19, issuing verbal and written instructions daily." He pointed out that there had been a turnaround in the COVID-19 situation and that the measures to curb infection were delivering outcomes. President Xi contended that such results "have once again demonstrated the notable advantages of the leadership of the CCP and the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics."¹³ In short, President Xi underscored his leadership in the fight against the pandemic and claimed that the achievements proved the superiority of the current system of CCP governance. Though the explosive outbreak of COVID-19 gave momentum to criticism of the governance system of President Xi and the CCP, the developments in mid-February indicate that the Xi leadership had begun to recover from the backlash. Subsequently, the number of new cases centered in Wuhan began to decline, and spread of the virus was no longer observed across the country. On March 10, President Xi visited Wuhan, gave instructions on infection control, and comforted hospitalized patients and healthcare workers. On April 8, the lockdown of Wuhan was lifted.

The Xi Jinping leadership tightened control over speech in an effort to contain criticism. In July, Professor Xu Zhangrun of Tsinghua University was detained by public security authorities. Despite Professor Xu's release a week later, Tsinghua University decided to dismiss him. That same month, the Commission for Discipline Inspection of Beijing's Xicheng District stripped Ren Zhiqiang of his party membership, citing, among other reasons, his "failure to maintain unity with the CCP Central Committee on important issues of principle."¹⁴ Ren was later indicted on charges of corruption, and he was sentenced to 18 years in prison on September 22. The Xi Jinping leadership sought to overcome the social dissatisfaction that manifested amidst the pandemic by highlighting the

strong leadership of President Xi and the superiority of the socialist system led by the CCP, in addition to further tightening its control over society.

(3) Xi's Ever-growing Political Authority

China has not seen a large-scale spread of the coronavirus since the lifting of Wuhan's lockdown in April, although clusters have occurred in some cities. The Chinese government focused on resuming and strengthening economic activities by introducing major fiscal stimulus packages and support measures for small and medium-sized enterprises. As a result, China's economic growth rate rebounded by 3.2% in the second quarter of 2020 and 4.9% in the third quarter compared to the previous year. In 2020, the economic growth rate reached 2.3%, making China the only country with positive growth among the major powers.¹⁵ At the third plenary session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) held in May following postponement, a target for the 2020 economic growth rate could not be set.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the session projected that GDP would exceed 100 trillion yuan in 2020 and absolute poverty would be eradicated, and emphasized that China was on target to achieving the goal to "comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society."¹⁷

The fifth plenary session of the 19th CCP Central Committee held in October deliberated and adopted the proposals for formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives through the Year 2035. These proposals presented the goal of raising the per capita GDP to that of a moderately developed country by 2035 to "comprehensively build a modern socialist country," identifying the 14th Five-Year Plan as the first step to achieving this goal.¹⁸ General Secretary Xi Jinping's two-term, 10 year tenure is slated to end at the 20th CCP Congress in 2022. Xi's central role in the formulation of the Long-Range Objectives through the Year 2035¹⁹ demonstrates he is keen to remain as the leader beyond the next CCP Congress. At the fifth plenary session, no new individual who was deemed a candidate for the next-generation leader was elected as a member of the Standing Committee.

Prior to the fifth plenary session, the CCP promulgated the Regulations on Work of Central Committee. The regulations specify operational matters and the authority of each post in the Central Committee, the highest leadership body in the CCP. They stipulate that the general secretary would set the agenda for Standing Committee meetings, and that the CCP Central Committee would use the "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" to arm the entire party and educate the people.²⁰ Both of these measures will lead to strengthening the power and authority of General Secretary Xi Jinping in the CCP. President Xi succeeded in restoring and strengthening his political authority that was damaged by the pandemic.

2. "One Country, Two Systems" at a Deadlock

(1) The Hollowing Out of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, the proposed amendment to the Hong Kong extradition bill that would allow extraditions of suspects detained in Hong Kong to China triggered a growing opposition movement from mid-2019. Protesters repeatedly staged large-scale demonstrations to demand the withdrawal of the amendment and the realization of universal suffrage. Hong Kongers have become more antagonistic to the Xi Jinping leadership, which has been increasingly interfering in Hong Kong's politics and neglecting "one country, two systems" that allows Hong Kong a wide range of autonomy. In the District Council election held in November 2019, the pro-democracy faction won 80% of the seats, securing an overwhelming victory over the pro-China faction, which held about 70% of the seats before the election. With Hong Kong's legislative body, the Legislative Council, scheduled to hold elections in September 2020, attention was focused on how the Chinese government would respond to the Hong Kong people's heightening calls for freedom and democracy.

The Xi leadership chose to take a hardline approach to ramp up the central government's interference in Hong Kong and silence the Hong Kong people's

calls for freedom and democracy. First, the Xi leadership undertook an overhaul of the key posts in charge of Hong Kong affairs. On January 4, 2020, Wang Zhiming, director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the central government's outpost in Hong Kong), was ousted and replaced by Luo Huining, former secretary of the CCP Shanxi Provincial Committee. On February 13, Zhang Xiaoming, director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, was demoted to deputy director, and Xia Baolong, former secretary of the CCP Zhejiang Provincial Committee, was appointed as the new director. Both have served as provincial heads and have extensive experience in local administration. Xia Baolong also worked under President Xi when he was head of Zhejiang Province. It is likely that influential personnel were appointed to shore up the departments in charge of Hong Kong policy and strengthen the control of the Xi leadership.

Furthermore, in May, the Xi leadership initiated steps toward enacting the Hong Kong national security law, which would enable the central government to directly crack down on activity in Hong Kong that denounces China. Article 23 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), a law that stipulates the system of the Hong Kong SAR, requires the government of Hong Kong to enact laws to prohibit uprisings against the central government and to prohibit political activities by foreign organizations. In 2002, the Hong Kong government attempted to enact the National Security Legislation, aiming to legislate Article 23 of the Basic Law. However, it was met with large-scale protests and abandoned. The Hong Kong government subsequently did not push for the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law. In place of the Hong Kong government, the Xi leadership moved to enact a law on national security. At the third plenary session of the 13th NPC held in late May, the draft "decision on the improvement of the legal system and implementation mechanism for the Hong Kong special administrative region to safeguard national security" was proposed²¹ and passed.²² Based on this decision, the Hong Kong national security bill was proposed to a meeting of the NPC Standing Committee.²³ Article 18 of the Basic Law contains the provision that laws can enter into force in Hong

Kong if the NPC Standing Committee adds them to an annex of the Basic Law, confined to national laws relating to foreign affairs, defense, and other matters outside the limits of the autonomy of the Hong Kong SAR. Under this provision, the NPC Standing Committee, which met on June 30, passed the Hong Kong national security law, and at the same time, added it to the annex of the Basic Law. It entered into force in Hong Kong on July 1 without being deliberated at the Hong Kong Legislative Council.²⁴

The Hong Kong national security law makes it a criminal offense to endanger national security through acts of secession, subversion of state power, terrorist activities, and collusion with foreign forces, and sets the maximum penalty at life in prison. In addition, it established the Office for Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong as a branch office of China's public security authorities. The law stipulates that the Office collects intelligence related to national security and provides guidance to the Committee for Safeguarding National Security to be newly established within the Hong Kong government. There is also a clause that could be interpreted to allow for the Office's direct exercise of jurisdiction over serious cases and for a trial to be held in mainland China. Even where a trial is held in Hong Kong, the chief executive is to designate the judges. Furthermore, the law is said to apply to residents outside of Hong Kong, and the possibility of foreign nationals being arrested and prosecuted on suspicion of violating the law cannot be denied.²⁵ Thus, the Hong Kong national security law gives the Chinese government wide discretion in the interpretation and application of the law, and it can be inferred that the law aims to deescalate the rhetoric and actions of the Hong Kong people and their supporters. And in fact, prominent democracy activists, including Agnes Chow and Jimmy Lai, have been arrested and prosecuted on the grounds of violating the Hong Kong national security law.

China's imposition of the national security law on Hong Kong hollows out the "one country, two systems" that granted Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy. The enforcement of this law without deliberation by the Hong Kong Legislative Council has greatly undermined Hong Kong's legislative authority. The establishment of security bodies by the central government that are not subject



Demonstrators protesting against the enforcement of the national security law in Hong Kong on July 1, 2020 (Getty Images/Kyodo)

voicing opposition to the law, despite Hong Kong's ban on gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In a public opinion poll conducted in August, about 60% responded they were opposed to the law.²⁶ Many countries have expressed concerns over China's imposition of the law on Hong Kong, and 27 countries, including Japan, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, issued a joint statement criticizing the law for undermining the high degree of autonomy, rights, and freedoms guaranteed by "one country, two systems."²⁷ Japan's then chief cabinet secretary Suga Yoshihide stated, "It is regrettable that the law was enacted despite strong concerns from the international community and the people of Hong Kong," and criticized the law for "undermining the international community's trust in the one country, two systems framework."²⁸

China forcibly enacted the national security law in Hong Kong despite backlash and concerns from the Hong Kong people and the international community. Underlying this move was the growing freedom and democracy movement in Hong Kong and strong anxiety among the Xi leadership that it could upset the CCP's one-party rule in China. Following the passage of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act in the United States in November 2019, the CCP official newspaper *People's Daily* published a commentary, which argued that "anti-Chinese forces in the United States" and "radical forces in

to the jurisdiction of the Hong Kong government is in direct contradiction to the purpose of Article 22 of the Basic Law, which prohibits the central government from interfering in the affairs of Hong Kong. The enforcement of the Hong Kong national security law set off demonstrations

Hong Kong" were colluding to push Hong Kong into chaos and criticized U.S. political forces for plotting to carry out a "color revolution" in Hong Kong.²⁹ Following the entry into force of the Hong Kong national security law, a commentary in the *People's Daily* accused some external forces of seeking to turn Hong Kong into a "bridgehead" of anti-China activities and a "base camp" of uprisings and riots and instigate a "color revolution."³⁰ It is believed that the Xi leadership determined it had to significantly tighten control over Hong Kong in order to maintain the CCP's one-party rule.

(2) Taiwan's Rejection of "One Country, Two Systems"

The intransigence of the Xi Jinping leadership in crushing the people's calls for freedom and democracy in Hong Kong and drastically restricting its autonomy, which was supposedly guaranteed under "one country, two systems," has raised strong antipathy and alarm among Taiwanese people. According to a public opinion poll released by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council in August 2020, 80.9% of respondents said that the enactment of the Hong Kong national security law violated Hong Kong's democracy, freedom, and judicial independence and damaged "one country, two systems." In addition, 88.8% of respondents objected to the CCP's insistence on "one country, two systems," while 82.4% rejected the Taiwanese version of "one country, two systems."³¹ Underlying Taiwanese people's growing rejection of "one country, two systems" was Chinese president Xi Jinping's open desire to unify Taiwan into China based on this principle. In January 2019, President Xi pointed out that "one country, two systems" was the best way to achieve national unification, and insisted on proceeding with concrete considerations of "one country, two systems" to be applied to Taiwan.³² While proposing the materialization of "one country, two systems" to be applied to Taiwan on the one hand, the Xi leadership hollowed out "one country, two systems" applied to Hong Kong and increased Taiwanese people's distrust of China.

This Taiwanese public sentiment was reflected in the outcome of the presidential election held in January 2020. President Tsai Ing-wen of the

Democratic Progressive Party, who had consistently opposed “one country, two systems,” was reelected by securing an overwhelming victory over the Kuomintang candidate Han Kuo-yu, who advocated improving relations with China. In her speech at the inaugural ceremony on May 20, President Tsai emphasized that Taiwan “stand[s] fast by this principle” on not accepting the “one country, two systems” advocated by China. President Tsai also announced Taiwan’s position to build a stable relationship with China based on the principles of “peace, parity, democracy, and dialogue.” Regarding diplomacy over the next four years, she indicated that Taiwan would strive to join international organizations and deepen partnerships with countries that share its values, such as the United States, Japan, and European countries.³³

Inaugurated in 2016, the Tsai administration has seen the number of Taiwan’s formal diplomatic partners decrease from 22 to 15 as a result of China’s diplomatic offensive. Meanwhile, the international community’s interest in and appreciation of Taiwan has increased. In particular, the Tsai administration has raised Taiwan’s international reputation by successfully combating COVID-19. Taiwan has succeeded in containing the spread of the coronavirus by quickly imposing entry restrictions and implementing thorough infection prevention measures. As of the start of the Tsai administration’s second term on May 20, Taiwan had 440 cases and just seven deaths.³⁴ Such achievements raised calls for permitting Taiwan’s involvement in the World Health Organization (WHO), the central actor for international cooperation against COVID-19. Advocating the “One China” principle, China has excluded Taiwan from WHO, an international organization. While China had allowed the former pro-China Ma Ying-jeou administration to participate as an observer in the World Health Assembly, it did not permit the Tsai administration.

Taiwan expressed its strong desire to attend the World Health Assembly in May 2020, and a campaign for Taiwan to participate was supported broadly by the major powers. It has been reported that the United States, Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, and New Zealand issued a demarche to WHO requesting Taiwan’s participation as an observer at the

World Health Assembly.³⁵ Taiwan’s participation was ultimately not realized due to the strong objection of China. In Taiwan’s absence, Japan’s then minister of health, labour and welfare Kato Katsunobu mentioned to the assembly that “the consideration should be given to regions which successfully embraced COVID-19 in terms of public health response, such as Taiwan.”³⁶ Izumi Hiroyasu, chief representative of the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, Taipei Office, also issued a statement, saying: “We sincerely regret that Taiwan was not allowed to participate as an observer, despite the many voices expressing support for Taiwan. [...] Japan will continue to strongly support Taiwan’s participation as an observer at the World Health Assembly.”³⁷

The Donald Trump administration of the United States accelerated efforts to strengthen relations with Taiwan. On March 26, 2020, President Trump signed the TAIPEI Act into law. The purpose of this law is to support the expansion of Taiwan’s international space, such as by requesting the U.S. government to support Taiwan’s membership and observer participation in international organizations and requesting the State Department to submit annual reports on the U.S. government’s efforts related to Taiwan’s foreign affairs.³⁸ The Chinese government strongly objected to the passage of the TAIPEI Act. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated: “The Taiwan question concerns China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as China’s core interests. The determination and resolution of the Chinese government and people to safeguard their core interests are firm as rock.”³⁹ The *People’s Daily* published a commentary criticizing that the passage of the TAIPEI Act could cross China’s “red line” on Taiwan.⁴⁰

Following the passage, the United States continued to steadily deepen its relationship with Taiwan. In August 2020, Alex Azar, secretary of health and human services of the United States, visited Taiwan, becoming the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit Taiwan since the United States broke ties with the island in 1979. Secretary Azar met with President Tsai Ing-wen. He praised Taiwan’s democracy and transparency for contributing to its successful response to COVID-19, and discussed ways to deepen the partnership between the United

States and Taiwan.⁴¹ In September 2020, Under Secretary of State Keith Krach, also visited Taiwan. Under Secretary Krach had dinner with President Tsai and attended the memorial service for former president Lee Teng-hui who passed away in July.

Furthermore, the Trump administration bolstered support for Taiwan on the security front. By 2019, the Trump administration had sold weapons, such as interceptor missiles, tanks, and F-16V fighters. In 2020, it decided to sell torpedoes and other weapons in May as well as air-to-surface missiles, multiple rocket launchers, anti-ship missiles, and other weapons in October. In August 2020, the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) released a declassified document indicating the U.S. position to increase arms sales to Taiwan if China were to become more hostile. The document is related to the 1982 U.S.-China Joint Statement, which sets forth that the United States would scale back its arms sales to Taiwan.⁴² Moreover, the U.S. Navy has sent vessels through the Taiwan Strait once a month.

With Taiwan's public further distancing itself from China while the United States enhances its ties with Taiwan, the Xi Jinping leadership has escalated the threat of force to check Taiwan and the United States. A symposium was held on May 29, 2020 to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the enactment of the anti-secession law, which mentions the possibility of using force against Taiwan. In his speech at the symposium, Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, noted that the anti-secession law poses a "great threat" to independence and secessionist forces in Taiwan and praised its threatening effect on Taiwan. Chairman Li stressed that all possible measures, including the use of force, would be taken to crush independence and secessionist forces in Taiwan, depending on the situation, and indicated the possibility of using force against "external forces" that interfere in Taiwanese affairs.⁴³

The PLA has also stepped up its military pressure on Taiwan. On February 9 and 10, 2020, the Eastern Theater Command conducted a joint exercise of vessels, aircraft, and other naval and aerial forces in Taiwan's periphery region. According to a *PLA Daily* article about the exercise, airpower including

bombers and fighters were deployed from the Bashi Channel and the Miyako Strait to the Pacific Ocean to conduct real combat-oriented training off the southeast coast of Taiwan, and "developed [China's] ability to safeguard the security of national sovereignty and territorial integrity."⁴⁴ On March 16, KJ-500 early warning aircraft and J-11 fighters conducted a nighttime flight drill off the southwest coast of Taiwan. A spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense noted that this drill was "targeted specifically at 'Taiwan independence' forces and their secessionist activities." The spokesperson went on to condemn the United States' strengthening of relations with Taiwan as interference in Chinese internal affairs, and stated that China would never condone the use of the "Taiwan card" by foreign forces.⁴⁵ In addition, in September, coinciding with Under Secretary of State Krach's visit to Taiwan, the PLA conducted a series of daily drills of flights by fighters across the median line in the Taiwan Strait, combined with flights by patrol aircraft and bombers off the southwest coast of Taiwan.

The PLA's intensification of military activities, which seemingly takes into account threats and attacks against Taiwan, not only increases tensions in its periphery region, but also increases the possibility of unintended accidents and collisions with vessels and aircraft of Taiwanese and U.S. forces. Moreover, increased military pressure on Taiwan is expected to further heighten the Taiwanese people's antipathy toward China. The Xi Jinping leadership is urged to respond calmly by squarely facing reality.

3. China Headed toward a "New Cold War"

(1) Intensifying Confrontation with the United States

The United States and China were mutually engaged in a "trade war" of sanctions and tariffs since July 2018. In late 2019, the two countries reached their first agreement to resolve this issue. This is the so-called "Phase One Trade Deal." The "Phase One Trade Deal," signed by President Trump and Vice

Premier Liu He at the White House on January 15, 2020, includes a \$200 billion increase in China's imports from the United States over the subsequent two years and a halving of additional tariffs on about \$120 billion worth of U.S. imports from China that the United States imposed in September 2019. This agreement, however, did not lead to an improvement in U.S.-China relations in 2020. Trade is only one of many issues over which the United States criticizes China. In his October 2018 speech on U.S. policy toward China, Vice President Mike Pence severely criticized the policies of the CCP government in a wide range of areas, not only trade and the economy, but also politics, such as surveillance of the Chinese people and suppression of the Uyghur people; diplomacy, such as the "debt trap" created by the Belt and Road Initiative; and security, such as the PLA's challenge to the U.S. military presence.⁴⁶

In addition, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has plunged an already deteriorating U.S.-China relationship into deeper hostility. As the coronavirus spread in the United States and the situation grew more serious, the Trump administration stepped up efforts to hold China responsible for the global pandemic. The Xi government strongly objected to the Trump administration's shifting of blame over its failure to control the virus onto China. In the United States, criticism intensified over the authoritarian political system of the CCP for causing delays in controlling COVID-19 in Wuhan. In China, this sparked widespread alarm that the United States sought to weaken the governance system of the CCP. The mutual distrust created by the COVID-19 pandemic was one of the reasons for the rapid deterioration of U.S.-China relations.

In May 2020, the White House released a policy document on China titled, "United States Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China." This document notes that the CCP seeks to transform the existing international order based on free and open rules to one that is more in line with Chinese interests and ideology, and that this attempt "harms vital American interests." It also asserts that the incumbent U.S. administration has taken a "competitive approach" to respond to China's challenge, which will not shy away from greater bilateral friction. Specifically, it gives examples such as resisting China's attempts by

strengthening coordination with allies and partners, pushing back on China's hegemonic assertions and excessive claims in the South China Sea and other areas, and deploying weapons and strengthening capabilities as necessary to deter China's ambitions. Lastly, the document presents the recognition that a "long-term strategic competition between [the] two systems" has begun between the United States and China.⁴⁷

The Trump administration has since taken a series of actions in line with this policy document on China. On July 13, 2020, the State Department issued a statement outlining the U.S. government's position on claims to maritime rights in the South China Sea. The statement condemned China's repeated coercion and intimidation of other countries in the South China Sea. It explicitly rejected China's claims to maritime rights across most of the South China Sea, noting that the claims were completely unlawful.⁴⁸ On July 21, the State Department demanded that the Chinese government close its consulate-general in Houston, Texas. On July 23, Mike Pompeo, secretary of state, gave a speech at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in California. He noted that the U.S. engagement policy implemented since Richard Nixon's presidency failed to deliver the transformation of China that was expected by strengthening bilateral relations. Secretary Pompeo criticized that President Xi is a true believer in a bankrupt totalitarian ideology and that the CCP is pursuing global hegemony based on communism, and advocated that Chinese communism will change the world unless the United States and the rest of the free world unite against it.⁴⁹

In response to such moves by the Trump administration, the Xi government strongly criticized the United States for attempting to start a "New Cold War" with China, and emphasized its readiness to resolutely counter the words and deeds of the United States where the CCP is the target of criticism. In an interview with the state-run Xinhua news agency on August 5, Wang Yi, state councilor and foreign minister, condemned that rhetoric and actions denigrating China by some U.S. political forces are "reviving the ghost of McCarthyism." He stressed that China is strongly opposed to the artificially created "New Cold War" and that "Anyone who tries to start a new Cold War in the 21st century

will be on the wrong side of history.”⁵⁰ Yang Jiechi, director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission Office of the CCP, published a commentary in the August 8th edition of the *People's Daily*, stressing that the CCP is supported by the Chinese people and that the United States' attempt to separate the CCP and the Chinese people is doomed to fail. Furthermore, Director Yang noted that Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Tibet Autonomous Region, and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region were “core interests” for China, and declared that China would “take necessary countermeasures” against any U.S. actions that undermine China's core interests.⁵¹

On August 26, the PLA fired anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM) from the Chinese mainland into the South China Sea. ASBM is a weapon which can be fired from the Chinese mainland and strike aircraft carriers and other vessels sailing at sea. The U.S. Forces views ASBM with wariness, calling it a “carrier killer.” China reportedly fired two types of ASBMs that it possesses, one DF-21D and one DF-26B, launching them from Zhejiang and Qinghai Provinces, respectively, into the northern waters of the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea.⁵² By demonstrating military capability to constrain U.S. military actions in the South China Sea, where China's core interests are a source of increasing friction between the two countries, China highlighted its firm stance both at home and abroad that it would not compromise in the competition with the United States.

President Xi himself expressed his determination to ultimately win the struggle with the United States. On October 23, 2020, President Xi delivered a speech at a meeting marking the 70th anniversary of the participation of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army in the Korean War. In his speech, President Xi argued that China's participation in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea was a legitimate countercharge against the U.S. Forces' threat to Chinese security and a just war to help North Korea combat the invasion by the United States. President Xi underscored that the ultimate victory of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army, which was overwhelmingly underpowered compared to the U.S. Forces, “shattered the myth of invincibility of the U.S. army.” Furthermore,

President Xi stated that “the Chinese people is sure to inflict a painful blow” if any action undermines China's sovereignty, security, and development interests, or violates and divides Chinese territory.⁵³

(2) Hardline Diplomacy Elicits Confrontation with Countries

The Xi government has employed hardline diplomacy involving threats and pressure, not only with the United States but also with countries that criticize China's response to COVID-19 or take issue with China's stance on Hong Kong, Taiwan, or other matters. China's foreign affairs appear to reflect the uncompromising nature of the Xi leadership, which seeks to forcefully contain criticism of itself. Consequently, more countries are adopting a critical view toward China, resulting in China self-handedly worsening the international environment surrounding the country.

In April, Scott Morrison, prime minister of Australia, proposed an international independent investigation into the source of COVID-19 that exploded in Wuhan.⁵⁴ In response, the Chinese ambassador to Australia suggested that China may restrict imports of Australian wine and beef and the number of Chinese students and tourists who go to Australia, speaking in an interview with a local newspaper.⁵⁵ Later, the Chinese government suspended some beef imports from Australia, imposed additional tariffs on barley imports, and urged its citizens not to visit Australia. In addition, China detained an Australian anchor who worked for a Chinese international broadcaster and de facto expelled two Australian journalists from China.

China has also deepened its confrontation with India over their land border. On June 15, soldiers from both militaries clashed in the Galwan Valley in the Sino-Indian border area, resulting in 20 deaths on the Indian side and four deaths on the Chinese side. This was the first instance since 1975 that a conflict between the two countries resulted in fatalities, although neither side used firearms in the latest incident.⁵⁶ Thereafter, dialogue continued between the two countries to ease tensions. However, in September, one of the two sides opened fire, leading both sides to accuse the other of firing. A standoff also took place between the two



Senate President Milos Vystrel of the Czech Republic being conferred a medal by You Si-Kun, president of the Legislative Yuan of Taiwan (right) (Taipei, September 1, 2020) (Kyodo News)

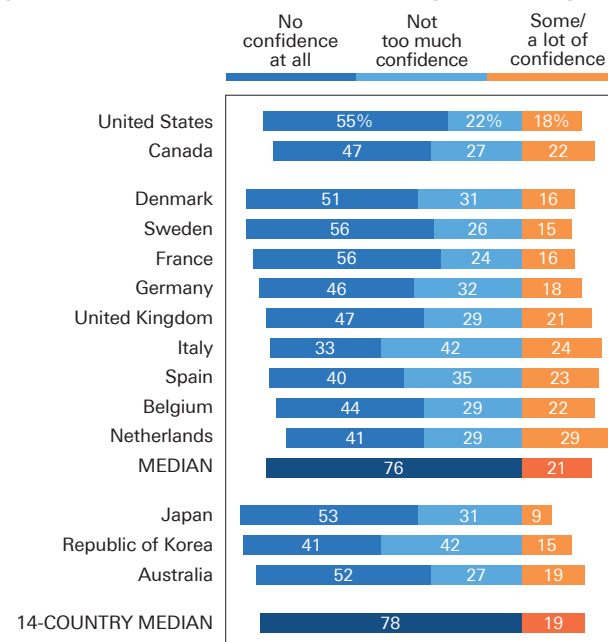
militaries near Pangong Lake in the same area.⁵⁷

China's hardline diplomatic stance was directed at European countries as well. In late August, Czech Senate president Milos Vystrel, visited Taiwan. President Vystrel delivered a speech on the theme of "unity of democracies" to the Taiwanese parliament known as the Legislative Yuan, calling on the two sides that have achieved democracy to work together to protect shared values.⁵⁸

The Chinese government strongly objected to President Vystrel's visit to Taiwan. On August 31, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who was visiting European countries, stated that President Vystrel's visit to Taiwan challenged the "One China" principle and threatened that President Vystrel would "pay a heavy price."⁵⁹ In response to this remark, the French Foreign Ministry issued a statement, which noted that "any threat to the EU's member state is unacceptable" and emphasized solidarity with the Czech Republic. At a joint press conference with Minister Wang, Heiko Maas, federal minister for foreign affairs of Germany, also criticized China's threat against the Czech Republic as inappropriate. Minister Wang, in a speech at the French Institute of International Relations, criticized U.S. unilateralism and urged China and the European Union (EU) to cooperate to promote multilateralism.⁶⁰ Minister Wang's visit to Europe, however, resulted in increasing European countries' distrust of China.

Negative views of China are on the rise around the world spurred by COVID-19 that originated in Wuhan and spread across the globe, coupled with the hardline political and diplomatic stance of the Xi leadership. According to

Figure 2.1. Confidence in President Xi Jinping's actions regarding world affairs



Source: Pew Research Center, "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries" (October 6, 2020), 15.

a survey on perceptions of China in 14 countries released by the Pew Research Center in October, sentiment toward China worsened in all countries compared to the previous year, and more than 70% in 12 countries had negative views of China. In particular, since the survey began, distrust of China reached its highest level in Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Many expressed negative views of China's response to COVID-19 and President Xi's role in solving global issues.⁶¹

Moreover, cooperation is deepening between countries that are highly criticized and pressured by China. On June 4, Prime Minister Morrison of Australia and Narendra Modi, prime minister of India, held a telephone

talk and issued a joint statement that labeled their bilateral relationship as a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.” The leaders agreed, among other things, to share a common “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) vision and to promote defense cooperation.⁶² On October 27, the United States and India held a 2+2 foreign and



Ships from the Royal Australian Navy, Indian Navy, Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force, and the U.S. Navy participating in Malabar 2020 in the North Arabian Sea on November 17, 2020 (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Keenan Daniels)

defense ministerial dialogue in New Delhi. The two countries agreed to cooperate to maintain free and open Indo-Pacific and to conclude an agreement on mutual sharing of geographic data that would contribute to defense cooperation.⁶³ With regard to multilateral cooperation among the four countries of Japan, Australia, India, and the United States, on October 6, Motegi Toshimitsu, minister for foreign affairs; Marise Payne, minister for foreign affairs; Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, minister of external affairs; and State Secretary Pompeo held a Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo. The foreign ministers of the four countries concurred on further developing practical cooperation to promote FOIP.⁶⁴ In addition, the four countries conducted the Malabar 2020 joint exercise in the Bay of Bengal from November 3 and in the North Arabian Sea from November 17.

4. The PLA's Stepped-up Activities

(1) The Military's Actions amid COVID-19

As COVID-19 spread across the country, especially in Wuhan, the PLA played a role in combatting the virus while steadily conducting military exercises,

highlighting both at home and abroad the PLA's advanced capacity to respond to the pandemic. Based on President Xi's January 20 instructions to contain the virus, the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism was established, comprised of entities under the Central Military Commission (CMC), the Joint Logistic Support Force, the People's Armed Police Force, and the Academy of Military Science.⁶⁵ On January 24, with the ratification by the CMC, the Logistic Support Department of the CMC mobilized a total of 450 medical personnel from military medical universities of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and sent them to Wuhan on military transport aircraft from Shanghai, Chongqing, and Xi'an.⁶⁶ On February 3, some 950 medical personnel were mobilized from hospitals nationwide affiliated with the Joint Logistic Support Force and sent to the hastily built Huoshenshan Hospital to specialize in treating COVID-19 patients.⁶⁷ Most of the mobilized medical personnel flew separately on eight Air Force transport aircraft from Shenyang, Lanzhou, Guangzhou, and Nanjing to Wuhan.⁶⁸ On February 13, an additional 2,600 medical personnel were sent to Wuhan from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Rocket Force, Strategic Support Force, Joint Logistic Support Force, and People's Armed Police Force, bringing the total number of military medical personnel dispatched to Wuhan to 4,000.⁶⁹ Chen Jingyuan, health division director of the Logistic Support Department under the CMC, praised the role of the PLA in responding to COVID-19, saying at a press conference, “All military units unwaveringly carried out President Xi Jinping's important instructions, swiftly took preventive control actions against COVID-19, and played the role of guardians and defenders of the safety of the life of the people and their physical health.”⁷⁰

The PLA is also playing an important role in the development of COVID-19 vaccines. A research team led by Chen Wei, academician at the PLA Academy of Military Medical Sciences, was among the first to begin developing a vaccine against COVID-19, starting the first phase of clinical trials in March and beginning the second phase of clinical trials for the first time in the world in April. In September, the team initiated the final third phase of clinical trials, taking the lead in the global race to develop COVID-19 vaccines. At an award

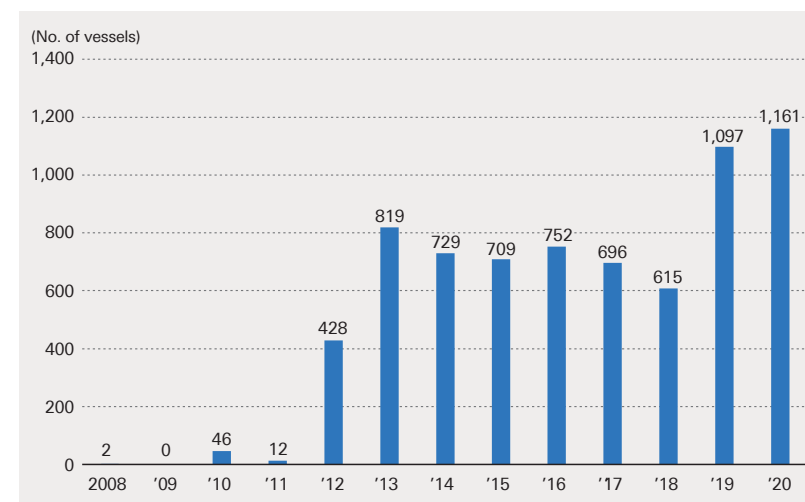
ceremony for China's fight against COVID-19 held on September 8, President Xi conferred the Medal of the Republic on Dr. Zhong Nanshan and the national honorary title on three individuals, including Dr. Chen. Speaking at the award ceremony, President Xi stressed that the significant strategic achievements made in the fight against COVID-19 attest to the CCP's strong leadership and to the superiority of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.⁷¹ The PLA's contribution to combating COVID-19 has been touted by the Xi Jinping leadership as proof of the superiority of the Chinese system.

Meanwhile, the PLA has steadily carried out various drills and exercises to strengthen its combat capability even amidst the pandemic. A spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense noted that the Chinese military is focusing on controlling infectious diseases, as well as prioritizing trainings and combat readiness, working to minimize the impact of infectious diseases on military trainings.⁷² Indeed, in March, the PLA participated in a joint drill with Cambodia as scheduled. In April, a fleet of six ships, led by the aircraft carrier *Liaoning*, was deployed from the East China Sea to the Western Pacific via the Miyako Strait, advanced to the South China Sea via the Bashi Channel, and then sailed back to the East China Sea via the Western Pacific. At around the same time, COVID-19 spread within the U.S. military, and the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* was unable to conduct operations for a long period. The *Liaoning* drill in the Western Pacific left an impression on people in China and abroad that the PLA had COVID-19 under control and had maintained its normal operational capabilities.

(2) Continued Hardline Stance in the Seas

Even as China was hard pressed to respond to COVID-19, it continued to make hardline forays into the seas aimed at expanding its maritime interests and increasing its ability to counter U.S. military presence. China has disputes with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and other countries over territorial rights and maritime interests to the Spratly (Nansha) and Paracel (Xisha) Islands in the South China Sea. In 2012, China established Sansha City under Hainan

Figure 2.2. Number of China Coast Guard vessels that entered Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands

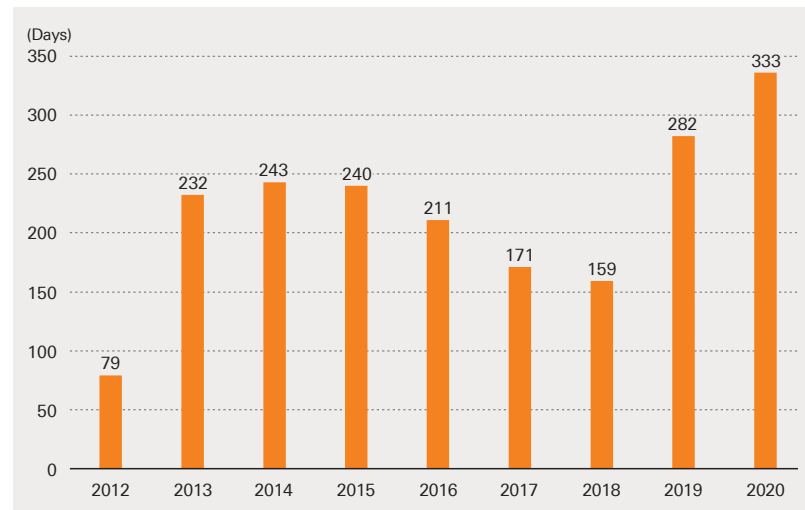


Source: Compiled by the author based on data released by the Japan Coast Guard.

Province as an administrative unit with jurisdiction over the entire South China Sea. Then, in April 2020, it announced the establishment of Nansha District and Xisha District under Sansha City to serve as administrative districts with jurisdiction over the Spratly and Paracel Islands, respectively. It is believed that China sought to strengthen the basis for its de facto control by establishing administrative districts with jurisdiction over the two disputed groups of islands.

On April 2, a vessel from the China Coast Guard (CCG) and a Vietnamese fishing boat collided in the vicinity of the Paracel Islands, a territory disputed by China and Vietnam, resulting in the sinking of the fishing boat. The Vietnamese government strongly condemned China, asserting that the CCG vessel deliberately collided with the fishing boat and detained eight crew members. The Chinese government, on the other hand, claimed that the Vietnamese fishing boat, which was operating illegally in Chinese waters, suddenly changed course to evade crackdown by CCG vessels and caused the collision. Although China

Figure 2.3. Number of days that China Coast Guard vessels entered Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands



Source: Compiled by the author based on data released by the Japan Coast Guard.
Note: The year 2012 covers the period from September 14 onwards only.

handed over the eight detained crew members to the Vietnamese side, criticism of China intensified in Vietnam.⁷³ Also in April, CCG vessels interfered with a Malaysian company's offshore drilling operation in the waters around the Spratly Islands. As government vessels sent by Malaysia continued to monitor the situation, the U.S. Navy and the Royal Australian Navy dispatched vessels to the surrounding sea area to conduct exercises and act as a check on China's moves.⁷⁴

In the East China Sea as well, China continues to make aggressive forays to expand its interests. China, which makes its own claims to the Senkaku Islands that are an inherent territory of Japan, has CCG vessels frequently intrude into Japan's territorial waters. In May 2020, CCG vessels approached a Japanese fishing boat that was operating in Japanese territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands, and they appeared to be tracking it. The Japan Coast Guard's patrol

vessels intervened between the two sides to protect the fishing boat, but the CCG vessels persistently pursued the boat. In July, CCG vessels attempted again to approach a fishing boat in Japanese territorial waters and intruded into the waters for more than 39 hours continuously. A spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserted based on Beijing's own position that the "China Coast Guard followed and monitored this ship in accordance with law and demanded it immediately leave China's waters."⁷⁵ Japan has sovereignty over the territorial waters of the Senkaku Islands, as a matter of course. The Japanese government has made a stern protest to the Chinese side, stating that the activities of CCG vessels are unacceptable. The Xi Jinping government is increasingly challenging Japan's sovereignty by relying on force. Incidents of CCG vessels approaching Japanese fishing vessels have occurred sporadically since then, and the October incident was the longest-ever incursion into Japanese territorial waters, lasting more than 57 hours. The number of days that CCG vessels sailed in Japan's contiguous zone in 2020 reached a record high of 333. Furthermore, China has enacted and entered into force the new Coast Guard Law. Japan has conveyed strong concern to China that the law contains provisions that have problems with consistency with international law, including ambiguity over applicable waters and authority to use weapons. There are acute concerns warranting caution that China may further arm its ships and take more provocative actions in waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands.

China has also accelerated efforts to strengthen anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities against the United States. From January to February 2020, a fleet of four vessels including destroyers belonging to the Chinese Navy's South Sea Fleet conducted a far-sea exercise for deployment to the Western Pacific. The fleet advanced into the Western Pacific by transiting the Bashi Channel from the South China Sea, crossed the date line, and approached 300 kilometers off the western coast of Hawaii.⁷⁶ It then turned westward, sailed past waters near Guam, and headed for the South China Sea, where a Chinese vessel irradiated a military laser at a U.S. Navy P-8A patrol aircraft during a surveillance flight. The U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet issued a statement strongly criticizing the laser irradiation

by the Chinese vessel, calling it “unsafe and unprofessional actions.”⁷⁷ In response, a spokesperson for China’s Ministry of National Defense condemned the actions of the P-8A patrol aircraft that had been monitoring Chinese vessels for a long period as “unfriendly in intention and unprofessional by operation.”⁷⁸ The PLA aims to interdict U.S. military forces’ approach toward China via the Pacific Ocean, which is anticipated in case of emergency. It is expected that the military rivalry between China and the United States in the East Asian seas, including the Western Pacific, will become even more intense in the U.S.-China “New Cold War.”

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