

An uninhabited island may draw our country into war

BY IFAY CHANG
SPECIAL TO THE SOMERS RECORD

Our mainstream media sometimes show a bias in their selective reporting of global events.

The case in point is the Diaoyu Island dispute, which has the potential of erupting into an Asia War drawing the U.S. into it. Yet, you hardly find enough reporting and analysis on TV and by our major news media.

Why?

Is it none of America's business? Or is the presidential election and the money it raised saturating our news media?

No, I hope not. We Americans need to know about any possibility of war because it matters to every one of us. In fact, in a presidential election year, we don't want to hear just blaming and bashing; we want to elect a president who can fix our economy as well as understand current events and conduct a foreign policy to protect our homeland and maintain world peace. Therefore, the explosive situation of this tiny Diaoyu (also named Senkaku) Island deserves our attention.

Many Asian news outlets have vividly reported the recent protests occurring in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and around the world including San Francisco, Houston,

Washington, DC, New York... (yes, U.S. cities) denouncing Japan's aggression and her maneuvering to capture the Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea. These protests were like an emotional volcano exploding after being suppressed more than 100 years. This sentiment not only was brewed by Japan's war crimes against the Chinese people and occupation of Chinese territories, but more so by the extreme cruelty, humiliation and shame the Japanese applied to the occupied Chinese. Furthermore, the Japanese government and its emperor never showed remorse, nor apologized after their defeat in World War II. Adding insult to injury, Japanese textbooks consistently white wash Japan's criminal acts before and during the war. The recent militant aggression, flamed by Japan's right-wing extremist party, whose doctrine is to restore Japan's pre-war glory and military might, included not only ambitions towards East China Sea, but also territorial disputes with Korea. In many ways, the Asian victims, just like the Jewish victims during World War II, suffered irreparable atrocities. Germany, at least, officially apologized for her war crimes and compensated the war victims. The Japanese, on the contrary, continue to deny their war crimes: Nanking Massacre, comfort women, biochemical human

experiments and killing millions of unarmed people.

Some protests unfortunately led to violence, such as destroying Japanese made cars. Violence should not be encouraged by any means, but the harsh verbal dialogue and militant actions and arrests against Chinese fishermen from Taiwan and mainland provinces made by the Japanese forces in the disputed region are more responsible for this kind of world-wide outbreak. Due to their internal conflicts, the two Chinese governments have exercised extreme constraint in dealing with the Japanese aggression to the point where they angered many Chinese on both sides of the strait and around the world. No wonder this suppressed shame is now boiling over, especially last month, on Sept. 18, the Memorial Day for the Japanese invasion of China in 1931. That invasion had cost China many lives as well as money,

land, sea and pride. All Chinese people buried that humiliation deeply in their memory while their leaders showed mercy to Japan by accepting Japan's surrender in 1945. The only condition was with for Japan to return all captured Chinese territories, including these tiny islands.

The global factions broke out immediately after World War II; China was divided internally and influenced externally by the U.S. and the Soviet Union; it is this situation that has given Japan the opportunity to brew her ambition and expansionism leading to the current forceful plot to capture the Diaoyu Islands. Unfortunately, the U.S. has contributed to the mess by giving back Okinawa to Japan in 1971 with access (so called administrative rights) to the uninhabited islands for strategic military consideration. This became the basis for Japan, especially the right-wing party, to

foster its expansionism. Part of the expansion plot includes the recent blocking of Chinese fishing boats from the island region to scheming to "purchase" these islands.

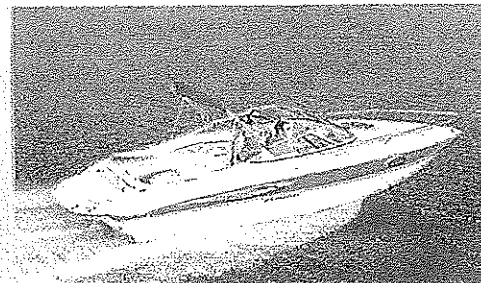
Why might this dispute potentially ignite a war in Asia, possibly drawing the U.S. into it?

The two fundamental reasons are the "century of shame" still felt in the hearts of the Chinese and the "aggressive behavior" continuously exhibited by Japanese as alluded to above. However, the real sparking issue is unfortunately attributed to U.S. actions. From the legal stand point, this type of dispute could be settled by international courts. Knowing her weak legal claim, Japan is not motivated to take that path, hence resorting to a phony scheme to buy the islands.

They are taking advantage of two factors:

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CHINA

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1. The two Chinese governments are hamstrung by their internal squabbles, unable to cooperate in defending their islands

2. U.S. strategy of returning to Asia by strengthening mutual defense treaties with Asian countries.

Although the United States took a neutral position on sovereignty rights of these disputed islands, it declared that these islands would

be covered under the U.S.-Japan mutual defense treaty. This emboldened Japan to take a hard line approach, threatening to deploy its military forces to "manage" these disputed islands. The famous and successful former Japanese prime minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, remarked about Japan's foreign policy: "Japan should endeavor to procure U.S. power to serve Japan's interests and objectives."

Apparently, the U.S.-Japan mutual defense treaty is regarded

by Japan as such power. Will the Chinese swallow this aggression and yield? I am afraid not. The Chinese people have felt and experienced foreign threats from the North and the West for centuries, especially the past 100 years; there is a strong sentiment that they must find vindication for their victimization.

Why are these tiny islands so important? From the U.S. point of view, these islands are strategic in terms of having a presence in

the Pacific-China sea, but from the Japanese point of view, these islands give them expansion of her sovereignty, not just in terms of the islands, but more the ocean for fishing rights (The giant Japanese fishing industry dominating world-wide can block off fishing boats from China and Taiwan) and the energy resources that lie in the East China Sea.

For the sake of world peace and justice, it seems that the U.S. ought to take a sincere neutral

position, not to encourage Japan's aggression in territorial claim. The U.S. with its oil drilling technology can help the region to develop energy resources. The U.S. and the world, including Japan, stand to gain by working with the Chinese to jointly develop energy resources in that region to share with the world.

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BECKERMAN

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whatever the price to rein in the UFO (Unidentified Formidably-sized Object) that rides behind me.

Confident in my jean-saving strategy, I had my nice jeans drycleaned and then brought them home and ripped them out of the plastic bag to try them back on. But as I went to pull them up, I realize something was amiss. I got them on my legs and over my knees, but once I got to my thighs, it was clear that the jeans were not going any further. I was pretty sure I had not gained 10 pounds overnight, although that has happened in the past, so I figured it had to be the jeans.

"I don't understand," I wailed to my husband as I stood in the bedroom with my jeans at half mast.

"I had these drycleaned. They're not supposed to shrink when you get them drycleaned."

"They must have laundered them instead," he said.

"I definitely told them dryclean, not laundry!" I protested.

"They must have gotten your instructions wrong," he replied.

I grabbed the hanger and read the drycleaning ticket. Then I peeled the pants off and stared at them accusingly. With a sudden realization, I peered at the jeans label.

"Actually they got it half right," I said shaking my head. "They were definitely dry-cleaned..."

"But they're not my jeans."

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