

# **Toward Stronger Strategic Communications**

**REPORT OF THE ADVISORY PANEL ON  
COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING TERRITORIAL  
INTEGRITY**

**(Translated from the original Japanese)**

ADVISORY PANEL ON COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

JULY 2, 2013

## TOWARD STRONGER STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

This report summarizes the discussions of the Advisory Panel on Communications Concerning Territorial Integrity in the form of recommendations regarding key issues in the full-fledged strengthening of the government's public communications efforts regarding territorial integrity. The members of the Panel strongly hope that the report will prompt the stepping up of the government's strategic communications activities regarding Japan's territorial integrity, leading to both heightened awareness domestically and the development of a national framework for such communications activities to be conducted coherently at home and abroad.

**The Panel members shared the recognition that Japan's positions regarding its territorial integrity were valid while arguments by the other countries involved in the situation were groundless. The Panel also recognized that in domestic and overseas communications activities, it would be effective to emphasize, regarding the situation surrounding the Senkaku Islands, the fact that change in the status quo through use of physical force by China is unacceptable, and that it was not until 1971 that China first voiced its assertion that it had territorial rights to the islands; and, regarding the Takeshima issue, the fact that while the Republic of Korea seized Takeshima by force, Japan has long sought a peaceful resolution to the dispute based on international law.**

**As for domestic and overseas communications activities regarding Japan's territorial integrity, Panel members shared a sense of crisis over the lead taken by the other countries involved in the situation in many communications areas, while Japan has fallen behind, and that its communications efforts targeted at third-party countries have been overwhelmingly insufficient. In order to foster an environment favorable to Japan's positions concerning territorial integrity, members noted the overriding importance of gaining the understanding of international opinion through effective communications at home and abroad. In the points raised in the recommendations below, they refer to not only the importance of raising domestic awareness of but also the need for a full-fledged strengthening of communications efforts, particularly directed at third-party countries.**

**Needless to say, maintaining amicable diplomatic ties with the other countries involved is extremely important for Japan. Communications activities regarding Japan's territorial integrity must be advanced in a cautious and strategic manner, striking a balance with Japan's other diplomatic interests, bearing in mind the possible impact on relations with those countries as a result of enhancing such activities. On this point, the Panel reached a consensus, with members noting the**

**need to advance a communications strategy that would not narrow Japan's choices in diplomatic strategy.**

The Advisory Panel on Communications Concerning Territorial Integrity is a council of experts convened by the Minister in Charge of Territorial Integrity. Given the recent situation surrounding Japan's territorial integrity, there is a need to conduct public communications activities more effectively both at home and overseas, with a full grasp of the assertions of the other countries involved in the situation and the perceptions of third-party countries. The Panel was established to identify and consider what measures are necessary in the domains of academic research as well as domestic and overseas communications strategy.

The Panel, comprising experts in foreign and security policy, international relations, international law, historical research, and overseas communications, met on five occasions beginning in April 2013, in the presence of the Minister in Charge of Territorial Integrity, for intense discussions on the situation surrounding the Senkaku Islands as well as the Takeshima issue. This report presents a summary of those discussions.

## GENERAL STRENGTHENING OF OVERSEAS AND DOMESTIC COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

*1. Overseas communications regarding Japan's territorial integrity need to be conducted strategically and in a concentrated manner, using narratives consisting of topics selected in such a way that makes it easy for members of the public to understand Japan's positions, including in third-party countries.*

Communicating the correctness of historical facts to the international community is obviously of great importance, but there are times when *perception* takes on a life of its own and gains greater international currency than *fact*. A refutation of the legitimacy of historical claims can be extremely difficult to follow for someone not directly involved owing to the complex intertwining of facts. Given that the other countries involved in the situation are incessantly communicating an array of arguments based on their own recognition of history, it is of great importance that Japan emphasize two points: that a change in the status quo through the use of force—unacceptable in modern international society—was made once and may be made again, and that Japan's basic policy is to resolve issues on the basis of international law.

Simply repeating the same official government positions on territorial integrity will have little impact. Communications on this issue should instead first consider the concerns of third-party countries, developing arguments that have a direct bearing on their interests and eliciting their engagement. The other countries involved frequently fail to remain dispassionate in their communications. Japan should instead develop cool-headed arguments that embrace the concerns of third-party countries.

Such arguments should be strategically framed in such ways as to project a positive image of Japan: a cool-headed country where the rule of law prevails and a peace-loving, future-oriented country with a long track record of contributions to the international community.

A strategic approach to communications raises the question of *who* is doing the communicating. The government's organizational structure should urgently be developed to bring the policymaking and communications functions together so they can closely coordinate to develop effective narratives as well as to implement a coherent communications strategy. In addition to the organizational aspects of strategic communications, also crucial will be the development of human resources to do the communicating. Communication officers—who may also be drawn from

the private sector—should be prepared to serve on a long-term basis, particularly those assigned the task of strategically advancing overseas communications. One must not forget that politicians, too, are to play a crucial role in the strategic communications effort.

***2. Communications in English need to be drastically enhanced, targeting internationally influential third-party countries.***

International opinion shaped in English claims a highly influential position in the international community. Members of the public in third-party countries where information is exchanged in English should therefore be considered the main targets of Japan's overseas communications activities concerning territorial integrity.

Japan lags far behind the other countries involved in terms of English-language communications regarding territorial integrity. Web-accessible academic papers in English on this issue written by Japanese authors are almost nonexistent. Neither are there English papers online describing the debate being conducted domestically in Japan on international law. Looking only at what is available online, the other countries involved have an overwhelming lead in English-language papers, and this has had a great impact on what is being written by scholars in third-party countries. Japan, too, must provide English-language documents that researchers and journalists can readily access on the web and quote.

It is important that members of the public in third-party countries gain an understanding of Japan's positions regarding its territorial integrity. This requires boosting English communications activities in various influential English-speaking countries.

Existing government documents in English on the subject of territorial integrity are, for the most part, translations from Japanese. One must remember, though, that a faithfully translated text does not always have the same impact as the original. Ideally, English communications should be developed in English from the outset and expressed based on the language's natural logic.

The government must prepare documents in English meeting stringent academic standards that support the legitimacy of Japan's positions regarding its territorial integrity. Another concrete way to strengthen English communications is to support initiatives by private-sector research institutes and other organizations to build and maintain online archives of reference materials and papers on topics related to territorial integrity. To this end, the Japanese government should also consider

developing systems to support the translation of Japanese papers and books on the subject of territorial integrity and the publishing of op-ed articles in foreign newspapers, as well as to work together with Japan-studies-archives at libraries in domestic and overseas universities in order to enhance the accessibility of academic papers written in English by Japanese scholars.

While the overseas media represents a vital communications channel, the number of Tokyo-based correspondents has been declining, and there are now fewer stories written by journalists working in Japan. This trend must be countered in some way, such as by further stepping up communications activities in the United States and Europe.

***3. In addition to government efforts, communications regarding territorial integrity must be pursued in a multilayered manner involving those from outside the government, including academics, think tanks, and foreign researchers.***

Looking at how public communications are pursued in other countries shows many examples where—in addition to foreign policy authorities—think tanks, which are actually government-affiliated research institutes, and groups of university-based researchers wage effective communications initiatives to shape public opinion in other countries and win support for one’s own position. There are also cases of multilayered communications efforts where governments play a leading role in establishing research institutes that invite foreign researchers and journalists to take part in their events and activities.

Japan lacks the setup to map out a public communications strategy and identify priorities, to gather relevant documents and data, and to present its positions in a multilayered manner. The government therefore needs to fill the gap by taking the initiative to develop such a setup. In the light of the fact that experts capable in communicating abroad are unevenly concentrated in universities, closer partnerships should be pursued with academia, making effective use of existing networks of Japanese and foreign researchers.

Other channels the government should pursue that would contribute to multilayered communications include dispatching Japanese researchers to overseas think tanks, accepting foreign specialists as visiting researchers, hosting international symposia in Japan, and expanding public communications activities directed at foreign residents in Japan.

***4. Speaking with “one voice” by adhering to a consistent line of argument would be an effective way of communicating Japan’s positions on territorial integrity to third-party countries.***

Freedom of speech is guaranteed in Japan, unlike in some countries where public expression is controlled, thus giving rise to a diverse range of opinions. Divergent views exist even on topics related to territorial integrity, and many such views are freely expressed.

It must be kept in mind that in the age of globalization, even those views that were directed at a domestic audience or to the other countries involved in the issue may quickly be reported in third-party countries, where those utterances can affect people’s understanding of or sympathy toward Japan’s positions. There have been many examples where the failure to communicate Japan’s positions with “one voice” has had a decisively negative impact. Not a few Japanese utterances have only served to further the positions of the other countries involved, and some have been so damaging as to wipe away in one instant all communications efforts made over the years. At the very least, government officials and cabinet members must speak with “one voice.” To facilitate this task and to ensure that statements from within and outside the government are based on an accurate understanding of Japan’s positions, briefing materials on territorial integrity that are easy to use should be prepared.

To advance a whole-of-the country public communications initiative, in addition to government efforts, Japanese citizens residing or otherwise active abroad will also be important assets. To help head off situations in which they might make comments that undermine Japan’s positions in conversations with foreigners, for example, the Government of Japan should provide English-language materials that contain straightforward responses. In particular, the government must strive to share accurate facts with individuals and organizations that are especially influential.

Promoting dialogue in Japan among people holding divergent positions will also be important to avoid damaging Japan’s national interests concerning territorial integrity.

***5. Effective overseas communications will require Japan to present positive images of itself while calmly setting forth explanations of the facts in brief, easily understood, and accurate words.***

As Japan produces its messages on territorial integrity for third-party countries, the

most important points will be the brevity, ease of understanding, and accuracy of its explanations, as well as the calmness with which they are presented.

Japan must consider a strategy to correct the mistaken perceptions of itself. One such method could be the use of narratives from an international legal perspective, rooted in extant international treaties, international jurisprudence, and the like. Here it will also be important for Japan to stress its positions as a nation that guarantees the freedom of speech and democratic values.

Since the end of World War II, as a democratic nation that has aimed for peace, Japan has consistently contributed to regional peace, stability, and prosperity. While projecting these facts, Japan must show that, when faced with a situation concerning its territorial integrity, its principles are not to use armed force to achieve resolutions but to resolve issues in line with international law. Japan must also stress that it has no intention of using force to change the status quo.

***6. The support of Japan's public opinion will be indispensable to advance government policies regarding territorial integrity, and there is a need to enhance domestic awareness, including via stronger cooperation with the education sector.***

As one basis for public communications initiatives on territorial integrity, it must naturally be made clear to the outside world that Japanese people share a robust mindset regarding Japan's sovereignty, and are determined to see to it that its territorial integrity is resolutely defended. Toward this end, there is a need for deeper understanding among the Japanese people regarding territorial integrity. Domestic efforts to enhance understanding through the education system will be particularly vital.

For this purpose, however, there is an insufficient supply of teaching and research materials that can accurately explain Japan's territorial situation. In Shimane Prefecture, the authorities have produced their own materials on the Takeshima issue, and are undertaking education in the prefecture's elementary and junior high schools with these as supplementary learning materials. To share information with people within Japan, we need to produce a deeper body of materials that can be put to use in the classroom. It should also be noted that some of the other nations involved in the issue have established research resource centers. Japan, too, must give more thought to ways to provide arenas for active learning on the topics.

In advancing domestic educational activities on the theme of territorial integrity, the government must approach the task with the goal of building up a mature body of

knowledge that can make dispassionate judgments based on the historical and international relations contexts.

***7. To press the legitimacy of Japan's positions more effectively, it is recommended to develop a framework for more robust survey and research activities, including the active collection of relevant literature and historical materials.***

The other countries involved are carrying out all-out campaigns on territorial questions, mobilizing their research institutions, universities, foundations and even nonprofit organizations. They are also seeking to bolster their national positions through historical debate related to situations concerning territories. It is hard to say that the Government of Japan has provided sufficient counterarguments in this area. One reason for this is the lack of a robust survey and research framework in Japan tasked with collecting historical data, as well as relevant literature and historical materials. It will be important for Japan to put its research institutions, resource centers, and library archives to use in discovering literature and historical materials on territorial integrity, translating those into English, and sharing them broadly.

In those countries, there are cases where the authorities have intentionally rejected requests to view materials in national archives, and information is locked away. Japan, meanwhile, has taken the opposite route and maintained openness, something that should be stated widely both in Japan and abroad to clarify the differences in values and systems between Japan and them.

***8. In Japan's communications activities, it will be effective to use photos, videos, and other media to appeal to the visual sense. Japan must also redouble its efforts to ensure that maps and other materials designed for visual consumption are in line with its positions.***

To deliver a message, a single photograph or other visual aid often has greater impact than a lengthy textual description. Japan must make effective use of photographic and other visual content to clarify the legitimacy of its positions. Following the 2010 collisions between the Chinese fishing trawler and Japan Coast Guard vessels, the video footage that leaked out became conclusive evidence showing which side was at fault. The Government of Japan needs to consider organizing a system that lets it release visual evidence to display the legitimacy of Japan's positions when it is urgently needed.

Furthermore, Japan must make continuous and steady efforts to ensure that writing on maps and labels applied to territorial features on the Internet are compatible with

Japan's positions. Further efforts are also required to make sure that maps, pamphlets, weather reports, and other information within Japan reflect Japan's positions.

## OVERSEAS AND DOMESTIC COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING THE SITUATION SURROUNDING THE SENKAKU ISLANDS

*9. In its domestic and overseas communications regarding the situation surrounding the Senkaku Islands, Japan must stress that change in the status quo through use of physical force by China is unacceptable. At the same time, Japan must also give full consideration to its communications in light of its diplomatic goal of further developing its mutually beneficial strategic relationship with China.*

With respect to the Senkaku Islands, which Japan validly controls, Japan's position is one of defending the status quo. Therefore, Japan is in no position of making any particular fuss over them. China, however, is approaching the islands by threatening Japan's territorial integrity through physical means. In crisis conditions like these, Japan no longer has the option of remaining silent. It is now a matter of vital importance to communicate the Japanese position to the world in order to deter these Chinese moves.

In producing its external messages on the Senkaku Islands, Japan must carefully consider how to communicate these messages to domestic and overseas audiences so as to achieve two diplomatic goals at once: (1) not allowing China to change the status quo regarding Japanese territorial integrity and (2) improving Japan-China relations without undermining the bilateral relationship as a whole.

The international community has very little knowledge of the way in which China is repeatedly carrying out actions that could be interpreted as indicating an intention to change the status quo through use of physical force. This is because it is hard to access information in English on China's dispatch of vessels and aircraft into Japan's territorial sea and contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands in ways that could be seen as being part of a scheme to bring change to the status quo, and the Government of Japan's efforts to remove these intruders. Easy-to-understand materials should be produced in English and shared with the international community.

*10. It will be effective to stress to the international community that it was not until 1971 that China first began making territorial arguments regarding the Senkaku Islands. It will also be important to disseminate the facts of the situation in the Chinese language.*

For 76 long years after Japan incorporated the Senkaku Islands into Okinawa Prefecture, China voiced no objection to Japan's possession of them. It was in 1971 that China stated for the first time ever its own territorial arguments regarding the islands. It is important for Japan to stress that such Chinese territorial arguments are absolutely extraordinary, with no basis in international law whatsoever, and are hardly to be taken seriously. In other words, there exists no issue of territorial sovereignty that needs to be resolved concerning the Senkaku Islands. Therefore, communicating to the global community the facts of the matter—that China stated no territorial argument until 1971—should be an effective approach. In doing so, Japan must also work to ensure that third-party countries understand that this is a mere statement of facts. Such a statement cannot possibly be an act that heightens tension.

As a democratic state, Japan guarantees freedom of speech, which makes it harder to speak with “one voice” to the international community. It will be important to calmly and evenly present the facts. In connection with the incorrect aspects of China's official positions and arguments, it will also be important to use the Internet to provide Chinese-language information that can be quoted and further disseminated. Patient, steady efforts to tell the facts of the situation are certain to prove beneficial in the end.

## **OVERSEAS AND DOMESTIC COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING THE TAKESHIMA ISSUE**

*11. With respect to the Takeshima issue, Japan must deliver appropriate messages on its position over the long term while also keeping in mind the larger picture of bilateral relations with the Republic of Korea. To this end, educational efforts to raise public awareness in Japan will be of utmost importance.*

The Takeshima issue has become a symbol of Korean nationalism, and it is expected that Japan will need to continuously make needed objections to the situation for a considerable length of time. While paying heed to the larger picture of Japan-Korean relations as a whole, Japan must carry out appropriate educational activities related to domestic public opinion in order to communicate Japanese views on the Takeshima issue over the long term.

Deeper understanding of the Takeshima issue has been achieved in Shimane Prefecture; there is now a need to elevate recognition of the issue on a nationwide scale. Enhancing domestic communications on Takeshima will be an important part of forming a coherent national viewpoint on territorial matters. To measure domestic recognition of the issue, it will be necessary to gauge the present state of public awareness via opinion polls and other means and then to work together with classroom educators and advance educational efforts in Japan.

*12. With respect to the Takeshima issue, Japan should communicate the facts that the Republic of Korea took Takeshima by force in the 1950s and is illegally occupying the islands to this day. It should also be stressed that the Government of Japan has responded to this by pursuing resolution through peaceful means in accordance with international law, including referral of the dispute to the International Court of Justice.*

Takeshima had long been recognized by the international community as a part of Japanese territory when it was taken by force by the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea unilaterally defined the “Syngman Rhee Line” on the high seas in 1952, including the islands within its scope. It subsequently dispatched a Coast Guard battalion to be stationed on Takeshima in 1954. In the course of taking the islands by force, the Koreans seized Japanese fishing vessels and took numerous Japanese fishermen prisoner, as well as using physical force such as gunfire against Japanese vessels, including Japan Coast Guard patrols. Korea’s actions since 1954 represent an illegal occupation of Japanese territory with no basis in international law. In response to these Korean actions, Japan has never opted to use force to resolve the situation, which would be contrary to justice, but has taken the opposite tack, tenaciously pursuing peaceful means to argue against the injustice. This should be an effective point for gaining the support of third-party countries.

Japan has also stressed its territorial rights to Takeshima in line with international law and has repeatedly pressed for a fair, transparent resolution to the situation at the International Court of Justice. The Republic of Korea, however, has rejected these proposals, without providing any reasons why they should be rejected. Japan should seek to prompt international questioning of the Korean refusal to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice and even to explain why it would not submit the matter to the court.

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# Meetings of the Advisory Panel on Communications Concerning Territorial Integrity

## First meeting (April 23, 2013)

- General discussion on communications concerning territorial integrity

## Second meeting (May 13, 2013)

- Discussion on communications (including their content) concerning the situation surrounding the Senkaku Islands

## Third meeting (May 28, 2013)

- Discussion on communications (including their content) concerning the Takeshima issue

## Fourth meeting (June 10, 2013)

- Discussion on methods of communications concerning territorial integrity

## Fifth meeting (June 25, 2013)

- Discussion on compilation of the Advisory Panel report