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Is DPJ Capable of Ruling?

By OKADA Shoichi

The Government of Japan released a Chinese fishing boat captain who had been arrested on charges of trespassing into Japanese waters and interference with government officials in the execution of their duties before dawn on September 24. The release came with bizarre reasons at a bizarre timing. Although the Prime Minister's Office quite conveniently attributed the decision of the release to the initiative of the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office in Okinawa, it was more than obvious that the Prime Minister's Office was involved in the decision of the release. These developments lead us to an unavoidable conclusion that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) may not be capable of taking the helm of the state. It is undeniable that the national leaders of Japan are being indecisive without any firm beliefs or strategy and evade confronting the crisis over such national fundamentals as statehood, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

At any rate, it is truly alarming that Vice Administrative Minister and other professional officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), who are in a position to put forth their professional opinions in line with Japan's national interest even at the risk of losing their positions, have so little presence at such a critical moment of national crisis. I would have to say that these days the officials of MOFA have become not so much patriots as salaried employees. If MOFA stands by fecklessly while letting a local district attorney make a "diplomatic consideration for the Japanese and the future Japan-China relations" in the release of the Chinese fishing boat captain, the *raison d'etre* of MOFA would be lost.

Under the pressure of demand of "apology and compensation" by China, who has revealed its hardhearted nature, the DPJ administration will find itself in a tough position not only in the Diet but in the public debates. Although we can seek some solace in the public statement of Director-General for Press and Public Relations of MOFA, who righteously said that the Chinese demand for apology and compensation was completely groundless and unacceptable and that there existed no territorial issue between Japan and China on the Senkaku Islands, this statement should have been made by Prime Minister or Chief Cabinet Secretary in the first place. Under the circumstances, the high approval rate in the public opinion poll, which the Kan administration has been enjoying, is sure to drop precipitously.

The essence of the current problem with China can be summed up in the remark of former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, who said that “China is testing to what extent they are allowed to step in (in the context of this territorial issue).” Should it be the case, we must undertake a fundamental review of Japan’s national defense, even dating as far back as the discussions of Japan's coastal defense of the last days of the Tokugawa Regime in the mid-19th century. In order to maintain Japan’s peace and security, it is imperative that Japan firstly reinforce the reliability of the Japan-US alliance, and secondly examine if the current constitutional restraint under Article 9 is realistic. These are the lessons we learn from this outrageous and unjust behavior of China.

(This is the English Translation of an article written by OKADA Shoichi, former corporate executive, which originally appeared on the BBS "Giron-Hyakushutsu" of GFJ on September 26, 2010.)