

**GROWING ANTI-JAPANESE
NATIONALISTIC SENTIMENTS
IN CHINA**

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Executive Summary

1. China-Japan relations have been tense since Japan nationalized the Diaoyu Islands in September 2012. In fact, the territorial dispute between the two countries is a key source of anti-Japanese sentiments in China.
2. Another important source of anti-Japanese sentiments manifested its ugly side last year when Japanese flags were burnt, Japanese restaurants raided, Japanese cars smashed and Japanese establishments set on fire. It also affected China-Japan trade, investment and tourist exchange.
3. A survey by China's *Horizon Research Consultancy Group* conducted in October 2012 (after Japan's nationalization of the islands) showed that the percentage of Chinese who have negative feelings towards Japan shot up to 87%, up from 65.9% in 2011.
4. A separate survey by Japan's *Kyodo News* conducted from November to December 2012 revealed that 79% of Chinese respondents viewed Japanese nationalization of the islands as "incomprehensible" and 24% had participated in various forms of anti-Japanese protests and boycotts in China.
5. Another key source of anti-Japanese sentiments is the historical baggage between the two countries including Japan's humiliation of China after the 1895 war and the atrocities Japan committed in China during the Second World War.
6. Although Japanese leaders have on separate occasions expressed contrition for what they did on Chinese soil, there is a lingering perception that Japan has not fully repented for what it did.
7. From time to time, these long-standing historical grievances are rekindled by territorial disputes or vice versa, and this potent mix is reflected in the spike in anti-Japanese sentiments.

8. According to a *China Daily* survey conducted in April and May 2012, respondents singled out territorial disputes as the foremost factor affecting China-Japan ties. In light of Japan's nationalization, territorial disputes as a factor are likely to become more salient.
9. China continues to bristle at what it regards as provocations by Japan such as Japan's Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso's comments (in May 2013) that for the last 1,500 years and more, Japan's relations with China have never been smooth. The perceived provocations and responding indignation only stoke anti-Japanese sentiments.
10. The trust deficit between the two countries in spite of the open channels of communications requires much time and painstaking efforts on both sides to rectify. The two countries will have to manage their differences to keep the destructive aspect of nationalistic sentiments in check.