



November 25, 2013

G-1244

Mr. Akitaka Saiki, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs lodges protest against Mr. Cheng Yonghua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Japan

1. On November 25, Mr. Akitaka Saiki, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, made a strong protest against Mr. Cheng Yonghua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Japan, under the instruction by Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs, regarding the November 23 announcement by the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China on the establishment "the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone" ,in which that aircrafts flying must abide by the rules set forth by the Ministry. The Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs made a strong protest and demanded China to revoke any related measures as below.

(1) The Government of Japan expresses deep concern about China's establishment of such a zone and obliging its own rules within the zone, which are profoundly dangerous acts that unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea, escalating the situation, and that may cause unintended consequences in the East China Sea.

(2) The announcement issued by the Chinese Ministry of National Defense obliges aircraft flying in international airspace to abide by its domestic procedures, and refers to the recourse to "defensive emergency measures" by Chinese Armed Forces in case where such aircraft does not follow the instructed procedures. The announced measures unduly infringe the freedom of flight in international airspace, which is the general principle of international law, and will have serious impacts on the order of international aviation. As many flight routes of civil airplanes run across the airspace above the East China Sea, Japan is deeply concerned about such measures from the viewpoint of its impact on the order and safety of civil aviation. It is a matter of course that the safety of civil aircraft must be secured in any case, and undue obligations should not be imposed on civil aircraft. Japan will continue to operate according to the existing rules.

- (3) The announced measures have no validity whatsoever on Japan, and Japan again demands China to revoke any measures that could infringe upon the freedom of flight in international airspace.
- (4) In addition, the “zone” set by the Chinese Ministry of National Defense seemingly describes the airspace over the Senkaku Islands, an inherent part of the territory of Japan, as if it were a part of China’s “territorial airspace.” Japan cannot accept at all such description.
2. In response to the above, Mr. Cheng Yonghua, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Japan, stated that in terms of the airspace established by the Government of China, some countries including Japan also established similar airspace and therefore such establishment of airspace meets the international practice and the announced measures do not target any specific country nor prevent free flight of planes, including civil airplanes, and demanded that Japan withdraw its irrational request of demanding revocation of the measures. Ambassador Cheng also stated that exchange of opinions should be carried out between concerned authorities of both Japan and China and also referred to China’s own assertion on the Senkaku Islands.
3. In response to this, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Saiki stated that China’s assertion could not be accepted at all and the Government of China should immediately revoke the measures and asked Ambassador Cheng to accurately report the protest from the Government of Japan to the Government of China.

(END)

* The foregoing is a provisional translation. The date indicated above denotes the date of issue of the original press release in Japanese.