

PRC radar-lock on ship 'provocative,' Japanese PM says

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The radar-lock that a Chinese frigate put on a Japanese warship was “dangerous” and “provocative,” Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said yesterday, as tensions rose in a territorial row.

“It was a dangerous act that could have led to an unpredictable situation,” Abe told parliament. “It is extremely regrettable. We strongly ask for their self-restraint in order to avoid an unnecessary escalation.”

The hawkish prime minister, who took office in late December last year following a landslide election victory, described the radar-locking as a “unilateral provocative action by the Chinese side.”

Abe's comments came a day after Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera announced that weapon-targeting radar had been directed at the Japanese vessel in international waters in the East China Sea last week.

The move marks the first time the two nations' navies have locked horns in a dispute that has some commentators warning about a possible armed conflict.

Onodera said a Japanese military helicopter was also locked with a similar radar on Jan. 19.

Japanese Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told a press conference that Tokyo protested on Tuesday to Beijing about the incidents and asked for an explanation, but had yet to receive any reply.

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Hua Chunying (华春莹) said yesterday that she was “not aware of the specifics” and referred inquiries to “competent Chinese authorities.”

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“You can understand in this way: We learned about this incident from the press reports,” she told reporters at a regular briefing.

The Chinese Ministry of National Defense did not respond to requests for comment.

US Department of State spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said Washington was concerned at the incident.

“With regard to the reports of this particular lock-on incident, actions such as this escalate tensions and increase the risk of an incident or a miscalculation, and they could undermine peace, stability and economic growth in this vital region,” she said.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2013/02/07](#)