

Turn 0 Update

Early this morning Japanese and Chinese naval forces clashed resulting in loss of life for both sides. A second Chinese destroyer conducted a freedom of navigation patrol down the same path as yesterday, openly broadcasting its non-hostile intent to conduct innocent passage but warning that it possessed the right to self-defense. When a Japanese destroyer once again moved to intercept, this Chinese destroyer did not alter course. Although it is not immediately clear which side initiated the use of lethal force, the encounter escalated. The Chinese destroyer was damaged but still seaworthy, losing 10 crew. The Japanese ship suffered far worse, losing close to 170 crewmembers, including 3 members of a 4-man US naval intelligence liaison team. The remaining personnel, including the other U.S. sailor, were rescued by nearby Japanese ships. The Chinese task force subsequently retreated outside contested waters, although throughout the day Japanese forces in the area have reported several possible submarine sightings.

The Chinese immediately issued a second statement accusing Japanese forces of violating UNCLOS and attacking a Chinese ship without provocation, forcing the Chinese to respond in self-defense. The Chinese reiterated that the lost lives were solely the responsibility of the Japanese and called on the world to resist Japanese imperialism, again referencing Japanese war crimes during WWII.

Once again, it appears that JCMCM was not activated. If there was any doubt as to whether the “crisis hotline” failed yesterday as a mitigation measure, that doubt must surely be erased by this morning’s engagement.

