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Chinese FM urges Japan to face history squarely

3/22/2015

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Saturday urged Japan to face its wartime history squarely and handle the historical issues properly so as to pave the way for the smooth development of bilateral ties.

The historical issues came under the spotlight as this year marked the 70th anniversary of the victory of World Anti-Fascist War and War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, Wang said when meeting his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of a trilateral foreign ministers' meeting between China, South Korea and Japan.

Japan's attitude toward the aggression war, which is related to the political basis of China-Japan relations, has a direct impact on Tokyo's ties with its neighbors, Wang said.

"I hope Japan could grasp the opportunity and face up to the history in order to unload the historical burden and advance toward the future with its neighbors," he stressed.

The Chinese top diplomat also noted a four-point consensus, reached between China and Japan at the APEC meeting in Beijing last year, was the first step taken by both sides toward the improvement of their ties.

But the real improvement of China-Japan relations depends on the implementation of the consensus, he said.

In November 2014, China and Japan signed the four-point agreement to ease their tensions, including resuming political, diplomatic and security dialogue while acknowledging different positions on the Diaoyu Islands.

Kishida said Japan hoped to take the trilateral meeting as an opportunity to advance exchanges and cooperation with China in joint efforts to further develop Japan-China relationship oriented to the future.

"Japan is willing to strive for the improvement of bilateral ties in the spirit of facing history squarely and advancing toward the future," on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII and the creation of the United Nation, he said.

At a press conference together with Kishida and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, Wang said the resumed meeting after a hiatus of three years symbolized that the three-way cooperation had once again got back on the right track and a joint press release showed the great potential and the vast space of their cooperation.

"What the three countries should consider now is how to ensure that the three-way cooperation will not be interrupted again and how to guarantee the healthy and smooth development of the trilateral cooperation," Wang said.

As neighbors and major economies, China, South Korea and Japan should join hands to contribute to the economic development of the region and the world at large, the Chinese foreign minister said.

But in recent years, bilateral relations among the three countries have met with difficulties due to the perception of history which has troubled the three-way cooperation and gone against the common interests of the three nations and the expectations of the international community, Wang said.

He said the spirit of facing history squarely and advancing toward the future was the right attitude to handle historical issues and the only way to push forward bilateral ties and boost the three-way cooperation.