

# **China-Japan-South Korea-US: Senkaku/Diaoyu, Takeshima/Dokdo, Yasukuni Shrine, textbooks and smog**

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**Evolution of the China, Japan and South Korean relations as reported in the English Japanese press.**

## Contents

- [Deputy PM Aso, abduction \(...\)](#)
- [Japan, China, South Korea to](#)
- [South Korea foreign minister](#)
- [Japanese lawmakers cancel trip](#)
- [U.S. warned government against](#)
- [Chinese officials admit \(...\)](#)
- [Japan, U.S. eyeing joint \(...\)](#)
- [China welcomes plan to tackle](#)
- [China reluctant to accept](#)
- [Obama to Abe: China raised](#)
- [Chinese spokeswoman blames](#)
- [Japan firm on Senkakus as](#)
- [Gov't considering using \(...\)](#)
- [China, S. Korea irked by \(...\)](#)
- [South makes "Dokdo history"](#)
- [Park urges Japan to reflect on](#)
- [China urges Japan to repair](#)

## **Deputy PM Aso, abduction issue minister visit war-linked shrine**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso and Keiji Furuya, state minister in charge of the issue of North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals, on Sunday visited the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, in a move likely to anger Japan's Asian neighbors.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, meanwhile, has offered the shrine a "masakaki" tree traditionally used in rituals celebrated by Japan's Shinto religion, with his name written below his title of prime minister.

Aso, who doubles as finance minister, made a bow at the worship hall and left without responding to questions from reporters.

Aso is the third member of Abe's Cabinet, launched in December, known to have visited Yasukuni following Furuya and Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Yoshitaka Shindo. Shindo visited the shrine on Saturday but said it was a private visit.

Furuya, also security chief, said he visited the shrine in his capacity as a Cabinet member.

"It is natural for a lawmaker to offer heartfelt condolences for spirits of the war dead who sacrificed their lives for the nation," Furuya said, adding he paid out of his own pocket for a sacred Shinto tree branch he dedicated to the shrine.

Abe will not visit the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine during its three-day spring festival from Sunday, as he is keen on mending ties with China and South Korea, sources close to the premier said earlier.

Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato also visited the shrine Sunday morning, and told Kyodo News that he visited the shrine in a "private capacity."

Tokyo's relations with the two neighbors have become tense due to conflicting claims over groups of islands. The annual trilateral summit involving Japan, China and South Korea, which originally was planned for late May, is now likely to be put off due to China's calls for host Seoul to postpone it, according to diplomatic sources.

Yasukuni, which enshrines convicted Class-A war criminals from World War II along with the war dead, is seen by countries including China and South Korea as a symbol of Japanese militarism.

Past visits by Japanese leaders to the shrine have triggered diplomatic disputes with China and South Korea, both of which suffered Japanese wartime aggression.

The current Japanese Cabinet holds the position that it will not disclose whether or not its members plan to visit or have visited the shrine.

Members of a nonpartisan group of lawmakers promoting visits to Yasukuni are set to go there on Tuesday.

**Kyodo News**, April 22, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130422p2g00m0dm001000c.html>

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## **Japan, China, South Korea to postpone trilateral summit**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — The planned trilateral summit involving Japan, China and South Korea is likely to be held in June or later, not in late May as originally sought, due to China's calls for host Seoul to postpone the annual leaders' meeting, diplomatic sources said Wednesday.

"Hopes of a May summit are dashed," a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official said.

Beijing has been calling on Seoul to postpone the planned summit in the South Korean capital, citing the ongoing ownership dispute between Japan and China over a group of islands in the East China Sea.

As a result, a foreign ministers' meeting among Japan, China and South Korea, which normally precedes the trilateral summit by about a month, is unlikely to be held in April as originally considered.

In light of the developments, Japan and South Korea have begun considering a bilateral meeting between Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and his South Korean counterpart Yun Byung Se late this month to discuss North Korea, which has been making headlines almost every day, the sources said.

South Korea will seek to arrange the trilateral summit in June or later, the sources said, amid speculation that the leaders' meeting may not be held until autumn at the earliest because Abe is expected to attend the Group of Eight summit in Britain in June and a parliamentary election is expected in Japan in July.

**Kyodo News**, April 18, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130418p2g00m0dm033000c.html>

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## **South Korea foreign minister cancels Japan trip over Yasukuni visits**

SEOUL (Kyodo) — South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung Se has canceled his scheduled trip to Japan this week in protest at visits by Japanese Cabinet members to the controversial Yasukuni war shrine over the weekend, a Foreign Ministry official said Monday.

The official told Kyodo News the visits to the Shinto shrine in Tokyo, which is seen in South Korea and China as a symbol of Japan's past militarism, took place despite Seoul's request not to do so and has soured the atmosphere for bilateral talks.

Yun had planned to meet with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida during a two-day visit to Tokyo from Friday. The bilateral talks would have been the first since new leaders took over in Tokyo last December and in Seoul in February.

He abandoned the plan, however, after Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso, who doubles as finance minister, and Keiji Furuya, state minister in charge of the issue of North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals, visited Yasukuni on Sunday to pay tribute to Japan's war dead, a day after Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Yoshitaka Shindo went there.

Although Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did not visit the shrine, he made an offering to it of a "masakaki" tree, traditionally used in rituals celebrated by Japan's Shinto religion, with his name written below his title of prime minister.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry issued a statement Monday expressing "deep concern and regret" over Abe's offering and the fact that incumbent officials paid homage at the shrine.

The shrine, it said, "glorifies Japan's wars of aggression that caused huge losses and pain to the peoples of neighboring countries and enshrines its war criminals."

It said the South Korean government "once again strongly urges the Japanese government to immediately stop its retrograde behavior which ignores history, and to behave responsibly based on a correct understanding of history, so that Japan can restore trust from neighboring countries."

In Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said South Korea had not officially notified Japan of the cancellation. Although the bilateral foreign ministerial meeting was under preparation, "the date had not been fixed," he said.

Japan's top government spokesman said he believes the three ministers visited the shrine in "their private capacity," adding that the government does not intend to restrict such visits as they are a spiritual matter.

"Every country has its own stance (on such matters) and I believe the differences in stance should not affect diplomatic relations," Suga said.

Past visits by Japanese leaders to Yasukuni, which enshrines convicted Class-A war criminals from World War II along with Japan's other war dead, have triggered diplomatic disputes with China and South Korea, both of which suffered under the Japanese military during the war.

Despite a shared concern over North Korea's nuclear and rocket tests in recent months and its bellicose war threats, relations between Seoul and Tokyo have remained chilly since August last year when then President Lee Myung Bak made an unprecedented visit to a pair of disputed islets in the Sea of Japan, which prompted Tokyo to recall its ambassador from Seoul in protest.

At the time, Lee said his visit to the South Korean-controlled islets was intended to pressure Japan to address grievances stemming from its harsh 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula, such as the issue of Korean women who were dragooned into sexual slavery for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

Under Japanese rule, Koreans were banned from using their own language at schools and were forced to adopt Japanese names, while hundreds of thousands of them were mobilized as forced laborers.

Yun and Kishida had been expected to discuss strategies to defuse the heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula, as well as the timing of a trilateral summit involving South Korea, Japan and China.

But a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official said last Wednesday that "hopes of a May summit are dashed" due to China's call for a postponement, citing its territorial dispute with Japan over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

**Kyodo News**, April 22, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130422p2g00m0dm044000c.html>

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## **Japanese lawmakers cancel trip to China planned for early May**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — A bipartisan group of Japanese lawmakers friendly with China has cancelled a trip to the neighboring country planned for early May due to difficulties arranging meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other senior officials, a source within the group said Monday.

The source said it was unclear whether a visit over the weekend to the war-related Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo by Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso and two other Japanese Cabinet ministers, as well as a ritual offering made to the shrine by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, have led to the cancellation.

Yasukuni enshrines convicted Class-A war criminals from World War II along with Japan's other war dead. Visits to the shrine by Japanese leaders have angered China and South Korea, both of which

suffered under the Japanese military during the war.

**Kyodo News**, April 22, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130422p2g00m0dm069000c.html>

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## **U.S. warned government against buying Senkaku Islands**

WASHINGTON — The United States warned the government not to purchase the Senkaku Islands last fall, former U.S. Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell said in an interview Monday.

The Japanese government consulted with the State Department prior to the purchase, Campbell revealed, and was given “very strong advice not to go in this direction.”

The U.S. government, in urging Japan not to follow through with the purchase, stressed the action could “trigger a crisis” with China, which claims the islands for itself.

“Even though we warned Japan, Japan decided to go in a different direction, and they thought they had gained the support of China, or some did, which we were certain that they had not,” Campbell said.

The central government purchased three of the five islets from their private owner in September to bring them under its control. The action enraged the government in Beijing and sparked a wave of anti-Japanese protests across China.

Campbell, while reiterating that the United States takes no position on the disputed territory, stressed that Washington wants to see “effective, positive diplomacy” between China and Japan.

The U.S. wants circumstances in which “both countries appreciate . . . the cockpit of the global economy is in Northeast Asia, and they must get along better,” he added.

In connection with Campbell’s comments, a Japanese government source said Japan was asked by the U.S. government to be “careful” in handling the matter.

The source also pointed to the possibility that there was a “gap in perception” between Japan and the United States over the purchase of the islands.

**Kyodo News**, April 10, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/04/10/national/u-s-warned-government-against-buying-senka-ku-islands-campbell/#.UWSvxPJUpWE>

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## **Chinese officials admit to locking radar on Japanese destroyer**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — A Chinese frigate did direct fire-control radar at a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer on high seas near the Japan-controlled Senkaku Islands in January but it was not a planned action, senior Chinese military officials told Kyodo News recently.

Admitting for the first time to Japan's allegation that weapons-targeting rather than monitoring radar had been used, the officials, including flag officers, said an "emergency decision" had been made by the commander of the frigate.

The claim that the incident was accidental is seen by Japanese Defense Ministry officials as signaling that China is either playing mind games or is softening its stance toward Japan.

The Chinese government has been critical of Japan, describing Tokyo's reports about the radar incident as a "fabrication," and is expected to maintain its stance despite the officials' accounts.

With regard to a violation of Japanese airspace in December near the islands, which are claimed by Beijing, the Chinese officials admitted it was part of the military's action plan but added they did not intend to aggravate the situation and do not intend to do so in the future.

The officials urged Japan to calm the situation by not becoming fixated with the incidents and called on Japan to refrain from disclosing its data proving the radar lock.

According to the Chinese officials, the frigate and the Japanese destroyer were three kilometers apart on the morning of Jan. 30 around 110 to 130 km north of the Senkaku Islands. The commander of the frigate directed the fire-control radar based on its rules of engagement without seeking direction from the fleet command or navy headquarters.

"The communication system used by the Chinese navy is not as advanced as those of Japan and the United States," a senior official said regarding why the commander did not seek direction from above. Whether the commander was reprimanded over the incident remains unknown.

The officials said the airspace violation was planned by the staff section of the national Land and Sea Border Defense Committee, which plays the role of a liaison office for the Chinese military, the State Oceanic Administration and the fishing bureau of the Agriculture Ministry, with the aim of escalating the situation and was carried out using SOA aircraft.

The flight course and altitude were thoroughly planned by calculating the points of Japanese radar and airborne early warning and control systems, they said.

**Kyodo News**, March 18, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130318p2g00m0dm003000c.html>

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## **Japan, U.S. eyeing joint operations for Senkaku contingencies**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Japan and the United States have started mapping out joint operation plans to prepare for any contingency arising from conflicting claims between Tokyo and Beijing over the

Senkaku Islands, sources close to Japan-U.S. ties said Thursday.

Gen. Shigeru Iwasaki, chief of Joint Staff of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, and Adm. Samuel Locklear, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, are expected to agree that Tokyo and Washington will accelerate the drafting of the plans, when they meet in Hawaii from Thursday, according to the sources.

Japan had sounded out the United States on devising joint contingency plans in light of concerns that an accidental clash over the islands in the East China Sea could develop into an armed conflict between Asia's two biggest economies.

Several concrete scenarios are believed to be considered, including one under which Japan's air, ground and maritime forces would conduct operations with U.S. forces in case the Chinese military mounted an invasion on the islands.

Tokyo and Washington have already developed joint plans for contingencies involving the Korean Peninsula, but not ones assuming an emergency situation involving Japan itself.

**Kyodo News**, March 21, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130321p2g00m0dm080000c.html>

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## **China welcomes plan to tackle its air pollution**

BEIJING — China on Thursday expressed eagerness to promote economic ties with Japan and welcomed a Japanese initiative to tackle air pollution in the emerging economic powerhouse.

Vice Commerce Minister Chen Jian and former State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan expressed their enthusiasm in separate meetings in Beijing with a delegation from the Japan-China Economic Association, a private-sector bilateral economic promotion body based in Tokyo.

The initiative, which the Japanese group called a cooperative network to reduce air pollution in China, involves environmental technology and knowhow pooled from by about 500 Japanese firms, including Toyota Motor Corp., Electric Power Development Co., Toshiba Corp. and Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd.

"We would like to cooperate with Japan as Japan possesses rich knowhow to cope with pollution," Chen was quoted as saying by a delegation member.

Tang said that despite tensions over the Senkaku Islands, the two nations should promote economic exchanges and cooperation because the two economies are so interdependent.

"Politics and economics are inseparable, but because economic ties between China and Japan are so close, the two countries should promote economic exchanges and cooperation as scheduled," Tang was quoted as saying.

Tang, who is also president of the China-Japan Friendship Association, welcomed the Japanese initiative.

Chen said that China wants to work with Japan to break the impasse in bilateral relations by promoting economic exchanges, especially in energy-saving and environmental protection.

He also said Beijing will make efforts to conclude negotiations on a trilateral free-trade agreement with Japan and South Korea "at an early date."

Tang said that China and Japan "must control today's critical situation, cool down tensions and achieve a soft-landing to bring (bilateral relations) onto a normal and stable path."

Tang urged Japan to "squarely face history," and "move in the same direction with China," without elaborating.

**Kyodo News**, March 23, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/03/23/national/china-welcomes-plan-to-tackle-its-air-pollution/#.UVAWMTfA55s>

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### **China reluctant to accept Japan's support over toxic smog: minister**

TOKUSHIMA — China appears reluctant to accept Japan's offer of technical assistance to help its neighbor cope with a deepening air pollution problem, Environment Minister Nobuteru Ishihara said Saturday.

Japanese and Chinese government officials agreed in a Feb. 22 meeting in Beijing to promote technical cooperation and seek measures against PM2.5 particulates, which measure less than 2.5 thousandths of a millimeter in diameter but can cause severe health problems.

In a speech in the city of Tokushima, Ishihara said Tokyo had hoped the envisaged collaboration would serve as leverage in attempts to improve bilateral ties soured by the territorial clash over the Senkaku Islands. However, he said Beijing has not shown any enthusiasm about advancing the agreement.

Tokyo has offered to provide free instruments to record PM2.5 levels and to also send Japanese experts over to China, but Beijing has said it will dispatch researchers to the United States and Europe to gain expertise in dealing with air pollution, according to Ishihara.

The thick toxic smog enveloping parts of China has begun to drift across to Japan in recent weeks.

**Kyodo News**, March 3, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2013/03/03/environment/china-reluctant-to-accept-japans-support-over-toxic-smog-minister/#.UTVAkzfA55s>

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## **Obama to Abe: China raised tensions over Senkakus**

U.S. President Barack Obama told Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that he understands China has raised tensions over the Senkaku Islands during their summit talks in Washington last month, sources close to the bilateral relationship said.

In the inaugural meeting of the two leaders Feb. 22, Obama twice referred to the Japan-controlled islets as “Senkaku” rather than Diaoyu, as they are claimed by China, the sources said Saturday.

Obama also voiced his appreciation for Tokyo’s calm response to Beijing’s increasingly provocative actions, including repeated incursions by Chinese vessels into Japanese territorial waters around the disputed islet cluster in the East China Sea, showing understanding toward Japan’s stance on the issue, the sources said.

Tokyo and Washington have refrained from releasing Obama’s remarks so as not to further provoke Beijing, according to the sources.

Meanwhile, Abe told Obama at their summit that Japan intends to protect and defend the Senkakus unilaterally, but that his government will avoid escalating already fraught bilateral ties with China by continuing to respond calmly to any future provocations, the sources said.

The clash over the uninhabited but potentially resource-rich Senkakus, which dates back to the 1970s, was spectacularly reignited by Japan’s purchase of three of the group’s main islets last September from their private owner in Saitama Prefecture, effectively nationalizing the entire chain.

In a worrying escalation, Japan in January alleged that Chinese navy frigates had locked their weapons-guiding radar on a Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer and helicopter in the vicinity of the islets in two separate incidents. Although the United States has accepted Japan’s account of the events, China continues to deny they took place.

At his summit with Abe, Obama also touched on the ongoing sovereignty rows between China and the Philippines and Vietnam in the South China Sea, underscoring the importance of the rule of law in resolving such disputes and stressing that Beijing must follow international regulations, the sources said.

**Kyodo News**, March 4, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/03/04/national/obama-to-abe-china-raised-tensions-over-senkakus/#.UTVLezfA55s>

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## **Chinese spokeswoman blames Japan for tension**

BEIJING, March 4 (Xinhua) — A Chinese spokeswoman on Monday blamed Japan for causing the current tensions in bilateral relations by breaking the two nations’ consensus on the Diaoyu Islands issue.

Fu Ying, spokeswoman for the first session of the 12<sup>th</sup> National People’s Congress (NPC), the country’s top legislature, said China is willing to resolve disputes through negotiations.

However, “one hand alone can’t clap,” Fu said, quoting a Chinese proverb to indicate that Japan has failed to engage in negotiations.

She said the Japanese government’s move to “purchase” part of the Diaoyu Islands last year went against the consensus reached by the two countries, which in turn shook China’s basis for maintaining restraint.

“That’s the reason why China sent patrol vessels to the Diaoyu Islands area,” said Fu, a veteran diplomat.

“If the other party chooses to take tougher measures and abandon consensus, ‘it is impolite not to reciprocate,’ as another Chinese proverb says,” she said.

The disputes over the Diaoyu Islands, which were triggered by Japan last year and have not been handled well by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s administration, have become the biggest challenge in improving China-Japan relations.

Historically, the Diaoyu Island and its affiliated islets had been part of Chinese territory until 1895, when Japan illegally seized them, Fu said.

The islands have appeared on China’s map since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), more than 400 years before Japan claimed the discovery of the islands in 1884.

It is also an undeniable fact that Japan was ordered to return all occupied territories to China according to the principles of the Cairo Declaration of 1943 and the Potsdam Proclamation of 1945, Fu said.

“We wish Japanese society and all sides could listen attentively to the voice of the Chinese people and put what happened in the past and what is happening now in perspective, so the two countries find a basis for the dialogue,” said Fu.

**Xinhua**, March 4, 2013

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-03/04/c\\_132207270.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-03/04/c_132207270.htm)

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## **Japan firm on Senkakus as China seeks to justify patrols**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Japan remains firm in its sovereignty claim over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, a government spokesman said Tuesday, in response to China’s remarks the previous day aimed at justifying the presence of Chinese patrol vessels near the islands.

“Japan cannot accept any remarks by China concerning the Senkaku Islands that are based on a unilateral claim,” Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshige Seko told a press conference. “It is obvious the islands are inherent Japanese territory both historically and under international law.”

Fu Ying, the newly appointed spokeswoman for China’s National People’s Congress, said Monday it is “inevitable” that Chinese maritime surveillance ships patrol waters near the Senkakus, as Japan’s move to purchase most of islands last September went against a bilateral understanding to shelve the issue of sovereignty over the islands.

China claims the two nations reached such an understanding during bilateral negotiations on normalizing diplomatic relations in 1972, but Japan says such an agreement has never existed.

**Kyodo News**, March 5, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130305p2g00m0dm055000c.html>

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### **Gov't considering using old SDF destroyers as coast guard ships**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — The government is considering whether to use decommissioned destroyers of the Self-Defense Forces as Japan Coast Guard surveillance vessels in a step to improve patrols around some disputed islands in the East China Sea, Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera said Tuesday.

The plan is being considered at working-level talks in response to repeated intrusions by Chinese vessels near the Senkaku Islands, claimed by Beijing which calls them Diaoyu, but some coast guard officials have expressed reluctance, citing higher fuel costs and different ship structures, officials said.

The Japan Coast Guard is likely to make the final decision on whether the destroyers can be used in their operations, Onodera told a press conference. One destroyer is set to be retired by the end of the current fiscal year in March and another three in fiscal 2013, he said.

**Kyodo News**, March 5, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130305p2g00m0dm074000c.html>

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### **China, S. Korea irked by new Japan textbooks on territorial rows**

SEOUL/BEIJING (Kyodo) — South Korea lodged a strong protest with Tokyo on Tuesday while China voiced displeasure after the Japanese education ministry once again approved school textbooks that contain territorial claims at dispute with the two neighbor countries.

The South Korean government summoned a senior diplomat of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul to the Foreign Ministry to lodge the protest and demanded that Japan take immediate action to correct the textbooks.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said, "Japan must take a correct view of history and reality."

China and South Korea reacted after the Japanese education ministry approved new high school textbooks that mentioned, as in past years, that Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and Takeshima islets in the Sea of Japan are historically Japanese territory.

Beijing claims the Japanese-controlled Senkakus, known in Chinese as Diaoyu, as Chinese territory,

while the Takeshima isles, or Dokdo in Korean, are under South Korean control.

“Our government again clarifies that we will never tolerate Japan’s textbooks for high schools containing unjust territorial claims over Dokdo, which is part of our territory historically, geographically and in terms of international laws,” the South Korean Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

South Korea also “strongly protests against Japan for not looking squarely at history and having approved textbooks containing content that evades its responsibility, and we demand a correction of such textbooks,” the statement said.

“The Japanese government should bear in mind that school textbooks not based on honest reflections of past history will saddle Japan’s future generation with the heavy burden of the past history by instilling a wrong view of history,” the statement said.

In Beijing, Hong reiterated the Chinese stand on the Senkakus and said, “The Diaoyu islands are historically Chinese territory and there is no room for doubt that China has sovereignty over the islands.”

Earlier in the day, South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman Cho Tai Young expressed “deep regrets” over the Japanese school textbooks.

“Last year, and also the previous year, Japan approved school textbooks containing distorted and unjust claims (over the islets) and our government has voiced grim protests and demanded a correction,” Cho said in a news briefing.

**Kyodo News**, March 27, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130327p2g00m0dm032000c.html>

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## **South makes “Dokdo history” classes mandatory**

SEOUL — South Korea’s elementary and secondary school students will spend more hours studying about the history of a pair of islets controlled by their country but claimed by Japan, Yonhap News Agency reported Tuesday, citing an education ministry official.

“We’ve decided to make it mandatory for all schools to teach students Dokdo history in line with Japan turning right to flare conflicts further,” the unnamed official was quoted as saying, using the Korean name for the Takeshima islets.

Starting this year, young South Korean students must undergo about 10 hours of instruction on the islets annually.

South Korea introduced the curriculum about the islets in 2011 “to give students a correct historical and territorial view,” but had not previously regulated how long schools must spend on the lessons, Yonhap said.

In related news, South Korea will also start offering on Friday history and culture programs on the islets at the Independence Hall history museum in Cheonan for about 2,900 people a year, according

to the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs.

The hall commemorates the Korean independence movement against Japan's colonial occupation of the Korean Peninsula.

In recent days, anti-Japanese sentiment has risen on the heels of a protest lodged by Seoul last Friday over the sending of a Japanese central government official for the first time to a local government ceremony commemorating the day the islands were incorporated into Shimane Prefecture in 1905.

On Monday, a group of self-employed business owners in South Korea said they would boycott Japanese goods beginning Friday in response to the dispatch of the official to the ceremony.

**Kyodo Press**, February 27, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/02/27/national/south-makes-dokdo-history-classes-mandatory/#.UTFNFTfA55s>

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### **Park urges Japan to reflect on past aggression — South's chief urges recognition of brutal colonial rule**

SEOUL — South Korean President Park Geun Hye on Friday urged Japan to squarely face up to past historical issues, alluding to its brutal colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

"We can open up a future of common prosperity with Japan only when Japan honestly reflects on its past," Park said in a speech marking the 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an independence movement against Japan's 1910-1945 rule of the peninsula.

"The dynamic of (Japan) being the aggressor and (Korea) being the victim will never change, even after the passage of a thousand years," Park, who was sworn into office Monday as the country's first female president, told a ceremony in Cheonan, South Chungcheong Province.

Park stressed that "Japan should have a correct view of history and assume a responsible attitude to open up the era of Northeast Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a partner (of South Korea)."

Anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea has risen after Seoul lodged a formal protest with Tokyo last week for sending a central government official for the first time to attend Takeshima Day in Shimane Prefecture. Earlier in the week, a group of small business owners in South Korea said it would begin a boycott of Japanese goods Friday to protest the dispatch of the government official.

The annual event is aimed at buttressing Japan's claim that the Takeshima Islands, which are administered and known as Dokdo by the South, are inherent Japanese territory and part of Shimane Prefecture. The pair of barren islets lie roughly halfway between the two countries.

At the ceremony in Cheonan, Park, a member of South Korea's ruling conservative party, also said political leaders of both countries should "have the courage and determination" to resolve issues related to their shared history, pointing out that "future generations of both countries should not be saddled with the heavy burden of (their) history."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida told a news conference in Tokyo on Friday that the government is striving to build “future-oriented, multilayered relations” with Seoul, despite the “difficult problems” currently fueling bilateral tensions.

Kishida also expressed hope that the launch of new administrations in both Japan and South Korea will steer the two countries toward friendlier bilateral ties. The conservative Liberal Democratic Party-led government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took office in late December.

Kishida also said Tokyo can’t consider a separate protest lodged Thursday by Seoul over his reference to the Takeshima dispute in a policy address to the Diet the same day. In his speech, Kishida said that although the ownership dispute is “not one that can be resolved overnight,” Japan will continue “to clearly convey to South Korea that it will not accept what it cannot accept.”

His remarks immediately ruffled feathers in the South, which interpreted them as Japan laying what Seoul views as a baseless sovereignty claim to the Takeshima islets, which were effectively controlled by Japan until 1945.

Also Friday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters that Tokyo has always regarded Seoul as an “extremely important partner” in maintaining peace and security in East Asia, where the threat from North Korea’s nuclear arms and ballistic missiles is rapidly increasing. Pyongyang successfully launched a satellite aboard a rocket in December, and carried out its third nuclear test last month.

Noting “there have been difficult issues between the two countries,” Suga said Japan wants to reinforce bilateral ties.

**Kyodo News**, March 2, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/03/02/national/park-urges-japan-to-reflect-on-past-aggression/#.UTFhWzfA55s>

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## **China urges Japan to repair bilateral ties**

BEIJING, Feb. 28 (Xinhua) — China on Thursday called on Japan to go in the same direction with it and take practical measures to turn around strained Sino-Japanese relations.

Luo Zhaohui, head of the Asian Affairs Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, made the remarks when interviewed by Xinhuanet.com, the official website of Xinhua News Agency.

The crux of the current crisis is the Diaoyu Islands issue, Luo said, noting that because of the illegal “buying” of the islands by the Japanese government, the bilateral relationship has suffered its gravest shock in the forty years history of diplomatic relations’ normalization.

Aimed at defaming China and the internationalization of the Diaoyu Islands issue, the Japanese side has adopted a series of negative measures, which undermines China’s interest and makes the situation more complex and difficult, he said.

“The Chinese side is highly alert of this, and takes a resolute stance,” Luo said, reiterating the Diaoyu Island and its affiliated islets are China’s inherent territory.

Luo said the Chinese government has the “determination, ability and confidence” to safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Luo said, “China and Japan are neighbors that can never be separated.”

He said the two sides should use history as a mirror and look into the future to properly handle challenges and improve the relationship under the principles of the four political documents signed by the two countries.

Luo urged Japan to face up to reality and history, and make joint efforts with China, in a bid to properly resolve the issue through talks.

“Now the ball is in Japan’s court,” Luo added.

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[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-02/28/c\\_132199317.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-02/28/c_132199317.htm)

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