

Beat: Local

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON HONG LEI ABOUT INDIA, ASEAN, ROK, JAPAN...

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QUESTION : India and the US will sign an important agreement on logistical support which will boost military-to-military cooperation between the two countries. Is China concerned about such cooperation ? Do you think it targets China ?

ANSWER : We hope that relevant cooperation will serve regional peace and stability, instead of targeting the third party.

QUESTION : It is reported that vice foreign ministers of China and Japan met in Tokyo today. The Chinese side demonstrated positive attitudes towards a meeting of foreign ministers. What is China's view on gradually realizing a foreign ministers' meeting?

ANSWER : The diplomatic authorities of China and Japan have been in contact. As agreed by the two sides, Assistant Foreign Minister of China Kong Xuanyou met with Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan Shinsuke Sugiyama in Tokyo today for the regular consultation between diplomatic authorities of China and Japan. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations as well as issues of common interest.

The Chinese side attaches importance to the development of China-Japan relations. We hope that the two sides can act in accordance with the principled consensus reached between the two sides on improving and developing bilateral ties on the basis of adhering to the four political documents so as to move forward bilateral ties.

QUESTION : It is reported that chief negotiators of China and the ROK to the Six-Party Talks had a meeting on February 28. Do you have more details on Special Representative Wu Dawei's visit to the ROK. What were discussed by the two sides ?

ANSWER : Special Representative Wu Dawei of the Chinese government on the Korean Peninsula affairs traveled to the ROK for a consultation on February 28. Special Representative Wu Dawei held talks with Hwang Joon-Kook, ROK Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs and chief negotiator to the Six-Party Talks on the afternoon of February 28, and met respectively with Deputy National Security Advisor Cho Tae-yong and 1st Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Lim Sung-nam on the morning of February 29. The two sides exchanged views on the Korean Peninsula situation and issues of common interest.

The two sides agreed to support the UN Security Council in adopting a new resolution concerning the DPRK's nuclear test and satellite launch, jointly maintain peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula, and stay committed to developing China-ROK strategic cooperative partnership. Special Representative Wu Dawei expressed China's solemn position on and stressed China's opposition to the US' possible deployment of THAAD in the ROK. It is hoped that the ROK can take seriously China's concerns and properly deal with the relevant issue.

QUESTION : ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat took place in Laos the other day and issued a press release, reaching broad consensus on advancing ASEAN community building and expressing concerns on the South China Sea issue. What is your comment ?

ANSWER : ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat, as a regular meeting of ASEAN, is the first high-level internal gathering after the

establishment of ASEAN community at the end of last year. We are glad to see that the meeting demonstrated the political willingness of all ASEAN countries to advance ASEAN community building, support ASEAN centrality in regional cooperation and deepen cooperation with dialogue partners.

The Chinese side always regards ASEAN as the priority of its neighborhood diplomacy and will continue to support ASEAN community building and ASEAN centrality in regional cooperation. It is believed that under Laos' chairmanship and with the concerted efforts of all ASEAN parties, new progress will be made in ASEAN community building.

The meeting also showed that the majority of ASEAN countries do not agree with hyping up the South China Sea issue. The South China Sea issue is an issue between China and some ASEAN countries, rather than an issue between China and ASEAN. Thanks to the joint efforts of China and ASEAN countries, the situation in the South China Sea is stable in general.

All parties are working to deepen practical cooperation on the sea while comprehensively and effectively implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). Positive progress has been made on steadily moving forward the consultation on a code of conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

China is committed to resolving relevant disputes in the South China Sea with parties directly concerned through negotiations and consultations and making joint efforts with ASEAN countries to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea.

That is the solemn pledge made by China and ASEAN countries in the DOC. It is hoped that relevant countries can work with China towards the same direction, stick to negotiations and consultations to resolve relevant disputes, and work in unison to uphold peace and stability in the South China Sea so that China-ASEAN relations can grow in a sustained, sound and rapid way.

QUESTION : It is reported that Daniel Kritenbrink, senior director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council of the US White House said on February 26 that it would be good if China's non-militarization pledge in the Nansha Islands would extend across the entire South China Sea. He also said that the ruling of the South China Sea arbitration would be binding on both China and the Philippines as they are all parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) ?

ANSWER : China's deployment of necessary and limited national defense facilities on its own territory is the exercise of self-preservation and self-defense rights granted by international law to all sovereign states. It suits the environment China's relevant islands and reefs are in and the threats they are facing. It has nothing to do with militarization. As Foreign Minister Wang Yi pointed out, non-militarization should not only target one country. It calls for concerted efforts of all relevant countries in and outside the region.

China's non-acceptance and non-participation position concerning the South China Sea arbitration initiated by the Philippines is fully backed by international law. That position is clear and consistent. The essence of the South China Sea dispute between China and the Philippines is territorial and maritime demarcation disputes. China and the Philippines have already reached consensus through bilateral channels and in the DOC on resolving relevant dispute by engaging in negotiations and consultations. According to Article 298 of the UNCLOS, China made a declaration which excludes disputes concerning maritime delimitation from compulsory dispute settlement procedures.

I would like to remind the US side that it may be reluctant to join the UNCLOS, but it is still obliged to respect the rights signatory parties are entitled to under the UNCLOS. We urge the US side to stop playing the international judge and stop pointing fingers at China.

QUESTION : You just said that China has the right to deploy missiles and radar systems in the South China Sea. Then why do you use another set of standards when it comes to the ROK's deployment of THAAD on its own territory ?

ANSWER : China's deployment of necessary and reasonable national defense facilities on its territory, which is to safeguard its sovereignty and legitimate rights and interests, does not affect the interests of other countries. Whereas the US' deployment of THAAD in the ROK far exceeds the normal defense needs and will severely jeopardize China's national security interests.

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Ruby BIRD

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com