

Chinese premier addresses Japan parliament

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao Thursday stressed the need for his country and Japan to overcome disputes over history in the first address to the Japanese parliament by a Chinese leader.

Mutual understanding would only benefit the neighbours, both of whom were victims of war, he added.

Wen said that China, parts of which Japan occupied from 1931 to 1945, appreciates the regret and apology expressed by the latter over its wartime aggression but he called for Japan to act on its regret.

'For the sake of friendship and cooperation, it is necessary to sum up and remember the lessons from the unfortunate past history,' Wen said.

Japan and China's relations have been plagued for years by tensions lingering from World War II.

'Peace and friendship between China and Japan have a serious bearing upon our countries' destiny and the well-being of our peoples,' he added.

Mutual understanding leads to better cooperation, which brings peace and stability to Asia and the world, the premier said in the first visit to Japan by a Chinese leader in nearly seven years.

The two nations should aim to resolve their dispute over gas exploration in a peaceful way and make the East China Sea a place of peace, friendship and cooperation, Wen said.

But Japan should understand China's stance of not tolerating Taiwan's independence and should act cautiously, the premier added.

Saying Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to China in October was aimed at breaking the ice, Wen said he hoped his three-day trip to Japan would also melt the ice between the two nations.

Abe's trip to China came immediately after he was elected prime minister by the National Diet Sep 26. It followed years of worsening relations with China under his immediate predecessor Junichiro Koizumi over his annual pilgrimages to the Yasukuni Shrine, which honours Japan's war dead, including soldiers convicted of committing war crimes in China during World War II.

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