

China, Japan reaffirms its commitment to North Korea sanctions

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Beijing: China, North Korea's most important ally, has reaffirmed its commitment to fully implement United Nations sanctions against Pyongyang over its recent nuclear tests and missile launches.

In a phone conversation with his Japanese counterpart, Fumio Kishida, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also called for new talks with North Korea on nuclear disarmament, China's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday.

Since agreeing to the new sanctions, China has redoubled calls for a two-track solution aiming to resolve the nuclear issue while forging a permanent peace agreement to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

While China remains North Korea's biggest source of economic assistance and diplomatic support, it agreed to the sweeping new measures out of frustration at Pyongyang's defiance of both previous U.N. resolutions and Beijing's persistent calls to avoid provocations.

The latest tensions began in January, when North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test before launching a long-range rocket.

In discussing the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, the two sides agreed that ... the sanctions must be fully and completely implemented, while during the process of implementing the resolution, ways be explored into how to restore a means of resolving the peninsula nuclear issue through negotiations, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

In their phone conversation Monday, the two foreign ministers also discussed the often-strained relationship between their countries, with Wang urging Japan to make "constructive efforts" to improve ties, the ministry said.

Wang told reporters at a news conference last week that he saw "little ground for optimism" in the outlook for China-Japan relations.

While giving no specifics other than Japan's "wrong approach to history and other issues," he accused Japanese leaders and politicians of "making trouble for China at every turn."

Relations between the two neighbors have been generally calm since violent anti-Japanese riots broke out in several Chinese cities in 2012 after Japan nationalized a chain of uninhabited islands claimed by China.

Yet, while a brief 2014 meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe marked a restoration of high-level contacts, ties have since moved at a glacial pace.

- AP