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## All is Illuminating and Revealing: Beijing-Tokyo Warming Up Ties

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The 45th anniversary of the China-Japan diplomatic opening made a great comeback this year. A full-fledged rapprochement between the two nations is in the offing without the honest broker-ship of the third party. Both nations decided to meet and discuss the issues by themselves. Glitches and hitches look vanishing soon and new bonds are sure to emerge.

North East Asia will witness a new beginning soon. Differences will be managed between Japan and China. Normalcy is on the card. Japan may exchange the high-level visit to China in a not so-distant future. Political pundits have been predicting a grand come back in ties between the two nations.

The chances appeared somewhat down-to-earth and levelheaded as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended China's Foundation Day ceremony, marking 68 years of independence, at the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo held on 28 September. This year also marks the 45th anniversary of the normalization of the Japan-China diplomatic ties.

Both Governments exchanged formal official congratulatory telegrams at the ceremony for the first time in ten years, something an unusual gesture. Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang exchanged congratulatory messages to mark the 45th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties in a further sign of a desire to repair relations.

Premier Li said that he hopes Japan can meet China halfway to safeguard the political foundation of their bilateral ties, properly manage and control their contradictions and differences, and promote the steady improvement and development of their relations. This was for the first time for Abe to attend the ceremony in his past three terms in office. He made a sudden and surprise appearance at the reception.

Moreover, it was thrilling as no Japanese Prime Minister in the past fifteen years attained any such ceremony organized by the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo. From a diplomatic angle, this was considered to be a major breakthrough – a gracious message sent to Beijing to warm up ties in the days to come. The reconciliation between the two great nations looks optimistic and affirmative.

Speeches exchanged at the event were highly illuminating and buried the past fifteen years of hatchet. Abe said that stronger cooperation between Japan and China is not only important to both countries, but also indispensable to peace and prosperity of Asia, given the current situation in the region. He said that he is willing to make efforts to strengthen the bilateral ties that would benefit both Japan and China.

Furthermore, he offered an invitation to Chinese President Xi Jinping "The next thing will be my turn to visit China. After my visit to China, I want President Xi to visit Japan.", he said He invited Premier Li to attend the China-Japan-South Korea summit to be held in Japan later this year.

Abe's message was powerful and extremely friendly and China readily accepted it within the Asian spirit of oneness. The last such messages were exchanged between the two Governments in 2007. Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono expressed his hope to visit China as early as possible in order to discuss concrete measures for bilateral cooperation.

Cheng Yonghua, Chinese Ambassador to Japan, said at the event that the relationship between China and Japan faces some complications but it is improving. Toshihiro Nikai, Liberal Democratic Party's Secretary-General, also accompanied Abe to the event, besides other high officials.

Simultaneously, speaking on the eve of the 45th anniversary, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Japanese Ambassador to China, Yutaka Yokoi, that he hoped for greater improvement in relations. "We hope that the Japanese government can pursue a more positive policy towards China... and not take one step back for each step forward, even two steps back for each step forward," Wang said. These warm words exchanged by both sides cannot be forgotten in resetting the tone of the new diplomatic and economic beginning between the two nations.

On 25 September, Abe dissolved the Lower House of Representatives of the National Diet, calling up snap election to be held on 22 October, a year earlier than scheduled. He held the earlier snap election on 24 December 2014, which added popularity in his comeback. With these polls, he has already completed five years and nine months terms since 2006, becoming the third longest serving Japanese Prime Minister in the postwar history after Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato.

Probably in this new snap election, Abe has been removing anti-China sentiments to get elected for the fourth term. His new tenure will be having a soft stance toward China, improving all diplomatic understandings, addressing outstanding issues, overcoming the rift in the South China Sea, and strengthening trade and investment relations between the two countries.

The prospects for trade and investment between Japan and China would be great importance in the post-reconciliation period. The Chinese-Japanese bilateral trade has decreased from the peak US\$ 330 billion 2013. The number of Chinese tourists to Japan recorded 6.3 million in 2016. There are many other vital economic dynamics.

The normalization of ties with China would give new impetus to the "Abenomics", his economic strategy as well as his geo-strategic postures in East Asia. The Abe's Administration has already hinted out at the cooperation to be given to President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In short, the reconciliatory postures in Tokyo and

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