

Transcript of the opening statement by Prime Minister Noda at press conference on August 24 (Excerpt: only Takeshima related part)

On August 10, ROK President Lee Myung-bak set foot on Takeshima. I expressed my regret at this incident at a press conference on the day when the relevant draft laws of the comprehensive reform were made into laws, and afterwards we lodged a protest through diplomatic channels.

There is no doubt about the fact that Takeshima is Japan's territory in light of the historical facts and based upon international law. During the early period of the Edo era, Takeshima was being utilized under the license from the Shogunate. Japan established the sovereignty by the mid 17th century at the latest. Later, we incorporated Takeshima into Shimane Prefecture by a Cabinet decision in 1905, reaffirming Japan's intention to claim the sovereignty.

The ROK side insists that it had established its effective control over Takeshima before Japan, but the wording of the documents the ROK refers to is ambiguous, and ROK has no unequivocal proof that supports its argument.

After the World War II, in the process of drafting the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the ROK requested that Japan renounce Takeshima, but the U.S. rejected the request. Notwithstanding these circumstances, after the War, ROK unilaterally installed illegal "Syngman Rhee Line," and began illegally occupying Takeshima by force.

The issue of Takeshima should not be discussed in the context of "understanding of history"; it is the problem of whether ROK's act of unilateral occupation is consistent with "law and justice of the international community." The ROK side may have its own case on Takeshima. By making its case on what one country believes as "just" unilaterally, however, does not guarantee constructive discussions among two countries with different opinions.

The best way to deal with an international dispute is, in light of "law and justice" of the international community, to argue before the International Court of Justice and bring it to a conclusion. The Government of Japan will continue to strenuously make the case to ROK that settling this dispute based on international law stands to reason.

Also, in accordance with the intended meaning of the resolution presented by the Diet today, the GOJ intends to strengthen activities to send out information on the position of Japan on Takeshima abroad and review how to enhance the whole of government readiness regarding the Takeshima sovereignty issue.

For more information:

Japan's position on Takeshima and historical facts (updated 28 August):

<http://www.facebook.com/InternationalPressDivision.MOFA.Japan>

The Issue of Takeshima (from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website):

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/takeshima/>