**Japan ready to extend $300 mil. to Ukraine: Kishida**

BRUSSELS (Kyodo) -- Japan urged Russia on Tuesday to play a "constructive role" in bringing a peaceful solution to the crisis in Ukraine and expressed readiness to extend at least $300 million to help Kiev stabilize its faltering economy.

In a speech in Brussels, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea, saying, "Japan maintains its position that the sovereignty and territorial integrity shall be respected and that any attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion cannot be tolerated."

"While attaching importance to promoting G-7 solidarity, Japan has been calling for Russia to play a constructive role for a peaceful solution of the situation," Kishida said, referring to the Group of Seven industrialized nations, a framework that brings together Japan, the United States, European nations and Canada.

Along with the $300 million and $1.5 billion already pledged, Kishida said Japan is preparing to provide about $16.6 million in fresh assistance for the recovery of eastern Ukraine.

Referring to recent terrorist attacks in France, he said such acts "cannot be tolerated for any reason, and I resolutely condemn it."

The foreign minister stressed fighting against terrorism is "of course not at all fighting against Islam," and that it represents "a challenge that requires the consolidated efforts of the international community in tandem with Islamic countries."

With this year marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, Kishida said, "Based on deep remorse for the past, Japan has followed the path of a peace-loving nation with the determination not to repeat the suffering brought about by the devastation of war that the 20th century experienced."

"We are now resolved to contribute even more actively to peace and stability of the international community," he said. "I am convinced that Europe will be an important partner for Japan when we put into practice the policy of 'Proactive Contribution to Peace'" based on the principle of international cooperation.

Amid the "increasingly severe" security environment in the Asia-Pacific region, Kishida said Japan's policy of proactive contribution to peace and the U.S. strategic rebalance to the Asia-Pacific both contribute to regional stability.

Kishida vowed to increase efforts to improve Japan's strained relations with China and South Korea, saying Japan has kept its door for dialogue with the two countries always open.

Touching on a summit between the leaders of Japan and China in November and foreign ministerial talks between Japan and South Korea, he said, "A silver lining has started to shine in through this door. Japan will strive further to make this glimmer of hope illuminate the entire Asian region."

"I hope that Europe will commit further so that peace and stability will be maintained in the Asia-Pacific region," he said.

Kishida also called on Europe to conclude negotiations for a free trade agreement between Japan and the European Union this year "by putting our wisdom together."

January 21, 2015(Mainichi Japan)

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20150121p2g00m0dm032000c.html>