

《国防部再次召见日本官员》

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China's top defense authority issued a rare response to Tokyo by lodging two official protests within two days to call upon the country to stop denying it has made false accusations against the Chinese army.

China's Defense Ministry posted a statement on its website on Saturday morning that said it had summoned the defense attache of the Japanese embassy in China to lodge a serious protest on Friday night.

Tensions had escalated on Wednesday, when Japan accused Beijing of sending military aircraft to engage in the "unusual approach" of Japanese fighter jets.

Ministry spokesman Geng Yansheng made a statement on Thursday, and the ministry summoned Japanese officials and posted two video clips of the airspace confrontation on its website. On Saturday, the ministry said: "Tokyo has turned a blind eye to reality and has distorted the facts by making misleading arguments."

Two Japanese F-15 fighter jets intruded upon China's East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone on Wednesday to conduct reconnaissance and follow the regular patrol of China's Tu-154 plane.

Video showed the Japanese fighter jets were carrying missiles when stalking the Chinese plane. Beijing said the shortest distance between the two countries' planes was about 30 meters.

"The Japanese side persisted with its position and refused to admit its mistakes," China's Defense Ministry said.

During Friday night's representation, ministry officials presented videos and photographs showing Japanese aircraft conducting close-distance reconnaissance and interventions against Chinese air force planes.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga and Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera on Friday demanded the Chinese side take the videos off the website.

The Japanese defense authorities even claimed Beijing "picked the wrong footage".

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying rebuked the request, calling it "shameless" and "unreasonable".

Tsinghua University senior scholar of Japanese studies Liu Jiangyong said the ruling Japanese cabinet is seeking to shift global focus away from its poor image and its controversial positions on historical issues.

The Japanese armed forces have strengthened reconnaissance and intrusion into China's ADIZ, Liu said. And Tokyo seeks to "beef up its military muscle and increase its comparative advantage on the sea and in the air when competing with China".

Prominent Japanese officials "made ludicrous remarks that demanded the Chinese site remove the relevant video footage", China's Defense Ministry said.

"The Japanese side should correct its mistakes immediately and make responsible explanations and statements to the Chinese side and the international community in this regard," it added.

Cao Weidong, a researcher with the People's Liberation Army Navy's Academic Research Institute, said China has never made trouble in this regard, but Japan has made false allegations and muddied the waters of the East China Sea.

"Beijing should take more initiative in media campaigns in the future, releasing evidence of Japanese provocation in a more timely manner," Cao said.

China's Ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua also sent a stern warning that Sino-Japanese ties are "suffering the toughest-ever situation" since relations were normalized more than 40 years ago.

"Currently, some prominent Japanese politicians are hyping up China's threat to prompt tension between China and Japan to push forward plans to revise the pacifist constitution and military buildup," the ambassador said in a speech at Tokyo's Soka University on Friday.