

Japanese 'Taiwan Relations Act' urged

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Japanese politicians take part in the inauguration ceremony of the Japan-Taiwan Co-Prosperity Chiefs Alliance in Tokyo on Thursday.

Photo: Lin Tsuei-yi, Taipei Times

An alliance of Japanese local government heads on Thursday called on Tokyo to draw up a Japanese version of the US' Taiwan Relations Act to improve bilateral cooperation on security.

The legislation would create a bilateral channel for security and political dialogues that both countries need, the Japan-Taiwan Co-Prosperity Chiefs Alliance told its founding event in Tokyo.

The alliance comprises 127 city and village mayors, 42 of whom participated in the event.

Kaga Mayor Riku Miyamoto, who chairs the alliance, said ahead of the event that the increasing risk of an emergency in the Taiwan Strait breaking out has sparked discussion in Japan.

Miyamoto cited former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe as saying earlier this month that an emergency in Taiwan would be an emergency for Japan and the Japan-US security alliance.

Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) should not misjudge the situation, Miyamoto cited Abe as saying.

Abe's comments reflect the opinions of those who hope for peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, Miyamoto said.

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As Japan and Taiwan have no formal diplomatic relations, the two countries conduct diplomatic affairs through civilian channels, he said, adding that President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) call for the establishment of a national security dialogue had gone unheeded in Tokyo.

Japan needs a law styled after the US' Taiwan Relations Act to create a mechanism that would enable official dialogue on security issues, he said.

The Japanese government's inactivity has prompted the local officials to demand legislative action, he added.

The two countries have a special relationship and a common destiny, Miyamoto later told the event.

Taiwan has played an indispensable role in the security of Japan's maritime lifelines, he said, adding that Japan should be grateful.

Taiwan is one of the countries that shares Japan's belief in the universal values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, said Sanae Takaichi, a representative of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), citing the party's platform for general elections earlier this year.

The LDP supports Taipei's bid to enter the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and participate as an observer in the WHO, Takaichi said.

Addressing the event via teleconference from Taiwan, Representative to Japan Frank Hsieh (蔡幸雄) urged the two countries to enhance ties between local governments, charitable groups and educational institutions, and through cross-cultural events, festivals and sports competitions.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Joanne Ou (歐陽) said the ministry is pleased that Japanese officials are voicing support for institutionalizing ties.

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Taiwan and Japan are like-minded partners with shared values and deep bonds between their people, she said, adding that the ministry plans to keep track of developments and promote the growth of substantive relations.

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