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Commemorating Potsdam Proclamation is of great realistic significance

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As the world marks the 70th anniversary of the signing of the 1945 Potsdam Proclamation on Sunday, experts said that the commemoration is of great realistic significance under the current international situation.

The proclamation, which radicated Japan's crimes of aggressions during World War II (WWII) and determined the principles under which Japan is required to behave after the war, is an important document for laying the foundation for the post-war world order and safeguarding peace in Asia and the rest of the world.

Moreover, currently someone are questioning the achievements of the WWII and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been pushing through a new security bill that may loosen the military confinement for Japan regardless of strong public opposition.

Within such a context, experts told Xinhua that commemorating the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Potsdam Proclamation is of great realistic significance.

Shii Kazuo, chairman of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), said he was surprised that Abe hadn't carefully read the proclamation -- a brief historic document marking the starting point of Japan's post-war democratization.

"A prime minister who hasn't carefully read the proclamation doesn't deserve the post," Kazuo said.

Fumio Saito, honorary professor at Kyushu University, said the paper has not only laid the foundation for the post-war world order characterized by democratization and non-militarization, but also marked the beginning of Japan as a democratic country, adding that it is absolutely unacceptable for some politicians to seek a big shift in Japan's security policy by denouncing the paper.

Andrei Ivanov, a senior research fellow at the Center for East Asia and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Studies at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations in Russia, said the paper, which demanded Japan's unconditional surrender, reiterated the basic principles set by the 1943 Cairo Declaration and served as an important international document that has laid the foundation for maintaining the post-war world order.

Therefore, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the proclamation bears new and realistic significance when some politicians in Japan are questioning the results of WWII.

Muhammad Abdel-Wahab Al-Sakit, former Arab League ambassador to China and researcher at China Studies Center of Helwan University in Egypt, said the Potsdam Proclamation and the Cairo Declaration are of great importance in promoting world peace and safeguarding the post-war world order.

It is just because of promotion by the Potsdam Proclamation and other legal documents that there have formed around the world many international organizations and institutions intended to

disseminate the notion of peace, promote development and progress and safeguard impartiality and justice.

However, Al-Sakit noted, the spirit of these two international laws is far from being adequately fulfilled. Countries in the world, especially Western powers, need to relinquish their double standards when dealing with world issues and make concerted efforts to bridge the income gap between the rich and poor around the globe and promote development of mankind.

While stressing the significance of the two papers, Tseng Hui-yi, research fellow at the East Asian Institute of National University of Singapore, said Japan has been averting the definition of the state of the post-war Japan by the two documents, and refusing to repent on the dark side of its history after WWII. It is very dangerous for Shinzo Abe to relax the constraints of the pacifist constitution when many Japanese people know little about the country's past due to a lack of history education, he said.

Tseng added that it is very natural for other Southeast Asian countries to worry about Japan's attempt to once again embark upon its old track of militarism if the country does not reflect on its past and attribute its defeat in WWII to a lack of self-defense.

Terry Charman, senior historian at the Imperial War Museum in London, told Xinhua that he was amazed that Japan "had been so militaristic and so aggressive in its foreign policy, with the military being a caste that could do almost anything in Japan in the pre-war period and certainly during the war," adding that the Potsdam Proclamation demanded Japan's unconditional surrender and deprived Japan of its military power.

"The stumbling block with Japan is that whereas in Germany the guilt of the Holocaust and other crimes committed by the Nazi regime has been fully acknowledged by the Germans, that still isn't the case with Japan. I think at the time the attitude was 'the war is lost, let's move on. Let's not keep harking back to the past'. I think that attitude is even more so in Japan because they do not perhaps see themselves as 'guilty'," he said.