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Experts, media praise China's efforts to ease tensions on Korean peninsula

BEIJING, Jan. 1 (Xinhua) -- Experts and the media of some countries recently praised the Chinese government's efforts in mitigating tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Kim Yong-hyun, professor of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea studies at Dongguk University in Seoul, during a recent interview with Xinhua, said the situation on the peninsula, due to increasing consensus of all concerned parties, may turn toward a better future in 2011.

He said the six-party talks on the nuclear issue on the peninsula are likely to restart in the first half of this year, adding China has made many efforts toward the aim and the efforts should be appreciated.

Kim said Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo visited South Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) after the peninsula's situation deteriorated due to the two countries' artillery exchanges on Nov. 23.

Dai tried to persuade both sides to prevent the situation from worsening, and suggested emergency consultations among heads of delegation to the six-party talks.

Kim said South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, against the backdrop of Chinese and U.S. efforts to broker dialogues to reduce tensions on the peninsula, recently showed more positive attitudes than earlier toward the holding of the six-party talks and dialogue between his country and the DPRK.

He said once the six-party talks are resumed, South Korea would be criticized by other parties if it sticks to its current hardline stance toward the DPRK.

Teb Galen Carpenter, vice president of defense and foreign studies at the Cato Institute, said "China's role in the recent reduction of tensions seems to have been crucial." China, he said, had taken on a "constructive diplomatic effort" to re-start the six-party talks

"Seoul's more conciliatory posture was in sharp contrast to the angry and confrontational statements coming from South Korea leaders just a few weeks ago," he said.

"China was the only country that had enough credibility with both governments (not just one) to achieve this easing of tensions. Beijing deserves considerable credit for playing such a difficult, but essential, role," he said.

Kenji Hattori, International News Department of Jiji Press, said Saturday that a stable Korean Peninsula was not only in line with China's interests, but also directly linked to the interests of Japan.

The great effort China had made to ease the tension on the Korean Peninsula has already brought some outcome, he said, hoping that China continue with its effort in this regard.

In addition, Akio Mukaiyama, producer of News Department at TBS, also confirmed on China's effort in defusing the north-south tension.

Mamoru Fukasawa, former deputy chief of the Second Tokyo Lawyers Association, said China had done a great deal of work on the issue, and the DPRK had been showing a trace of less tension in its stance.

The Financial Times newspaper of Britain recently reported that the DPRK's restraint over the past week and South Korea's new willingness to resume six-party talks may owe more to Chinese efforts than a volte-face by Seoul.

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