

Russia national day

Growing respect, sympathy for Japan

Mikhail M. Bely
AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA

I appreciate this opportunity to address readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of our national holiday, Russia Day, which commemorates the State Sovereignty Declaration that was adopted June 12, 1990, and marked Russia's starting point on the road toward building a new society with a modern political system and market economy.

First of all, on behalf of all Russian people and personally I would like to extend condolences to the victims and all those affected by the tragic events of March 11, 2011, in Japan. Together with the Japanese people we mourn the dead; our hearts go out to those who lost loved ones and who lost their homes in the devastating earthquake and tsunami.

Russian people deeply respect and admire the dignity of the Japanese people who stood up to the ordeal and continued to be strong in the face of the tragedy. We believe that with the support of the international community, the Japanese people will be able to overcome all hardships and difficulties, and Japan will come out of hard times even stronger and more prosperous.

The tragedy in Japan has echoed painfully in the hearts of the Russian people, leaving no one indifferent. In solidarity with the Japanese people, thousands of our fellow citizens came with flowers to the Embassy of Japan in Moscow, to the Consulates General in St. Petersburg, Khabarovsk, Vladivostok and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

In his condolences to Prime Minister Naoto Kan, President

of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev stated Russia's readiness to render necessary assistance to Japan in overcoming the aftereffects of the tragedy. A team of 160 rescue workers of the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry was sent to the city of Sendai and relief aid was delivered to this area. In accordance with the agreements, the Russian side has increased energy supplies to Japan, so necessary to address electricity shortages.

Japan is our good neighbor with whom we have many years of friendship and cooperation. Our country is ready to increase its assistance to Japan in coping with the tragedy. Russian President Medvedev confirmed this commitment during his meeting with Prime Minister Kan on May 27 on the sidelines of the G-8 summit in Deauville, France. Russia, in particular, will cooperate with Japan by sharing its experiences in the liquidation of consequences of nuclear disasters, obtained during recovery and restoration work at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and in the areas affected by radioactive contamination.

An exclusive atmosphere of close cooperation between our two countries formed during our activities after the tragedy of March 11 has made us appreciate anew the importance of bilateral relations. In my opinion, these changes have largely contributed to the success of the meeting of the leaders of our countries in Deauville. It is important not only to maintain this positive attitude of cooperation, but also to use it to deepen political dialogue and fundamentally further our relations in eco-

conomic, cultural and other fields.

Today we are witnessing a successful development of Russian-Japanese economic, trade and investment cooperation. After a decline as a result of the 2008 global financial crisis, today the volume of bilateral trade between our countries is showing a steady revival. By the end of this year, the annual trade is expected to reach the pre-crisis level, accounting for about \$30 billion.

Certain positive developments have also been seen in investment cooperation. More and more Japanese companies

are inaugurating or planning to inaugurate enterprises in Russia. The foundation of large joint ventures — LNG (liquefied natural gas) and petrochemical plants, new automobile assembly lines — in the Russian Far East is the nearest future. There is great potential for our economic cooperation and we should use this potential to its full extent.

Cultural exchanges play an important role in bilateral cooperation. Festivals of Russian culture in Japan and similar Japanese events in Russia have become a tradition. They

help strengthen friendship and mutual understanding, deepen positive mutual interest, thus cementing our bilateral relations.

The opening ceremony of this year's Russian Cultural Festival will be held in early July in the city of Hakodate, which is closely linked with the history of Russian-Japanese relations. It was in Hakodate that the first Russian diplomatic mission in Japan was opened in 1858. It was in this city where 150 years ago Archbishop Nicolas (Saint Nicolas) began his mission to preach Orthodox Christianity to

the Japanese people; the famous Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Tokyo is also known as Nickolai-do.

Of course, Hakodate will not be the only venue for events within the festival. Japanese audiences in Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama and other cities will have an opportunity to attend performances by famous Russian ballet, opera and theatrical troupes, orchestras, and among them the famous Pyatnitsky

State Academic Russian Folk Choir; enjoy performances by the Moscow Circus; and various exhibitions.

I would like to invite all readers of The Japan Times to attend the events of the festival to learn more about Russia, to get acquainted with its art. I hope this will inspire you to visit my country and experience Moscow and St. Petersburg, see with your own eyes the Kremlin and the Hermitage museum, visit

theaters and other museums; take in the atmosphere of the Red Square; view Peterhof Palace, Tsarskoe Selo (Czar's Village) and the famous Amber Chamber.

I am sure this will contribute to further the development of mutual understanding and friendship between our countries and peoples, and deepen a new, remarkable emotional atmosphere in the relations between our nations created in the wake of growing respect and sympathy in Russia for the Japanese people, stoically recovering from the recent disaster, and the willingness of the Russian people to help.

Fostering a strategic partnership

Kunio Hatoyama
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-RUSSIA
ASSOCIATION

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Declaration of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of the Russian Federation on behalf of the Japan-Russia Association.

Since the declaration of sovereignty, the Russian Federation has reconstructed various aspects of its politics and economy, and steadily progressed around the export of natural resources. Also, Russia has kept developing and flourishing so much, not only by enhancing innovation in technology and seeking to transform the social and economic structures, but also by participating in international politics and communities as a member of the Group of Eight and the Group of Twenty.

On the domestic front, Russia has an important political season ahead, with the lower house

election in December as well as the presidential election next March.

For Japan, an island nation and a resource-poor country, building peaceful and friendly relationships with neighboring countries as well as other nations is significant for it to survive and to develop. Especially with its old ally Russia, it is desirable to strengthen friendly bilateral relations.

Today, Japan and Russia have loads of work to do, such as the conclusion of a peace treaty by solving the unsettled territorial issue, and other aspects, including political and economic issues. However, the two countries need to solve the pending problems by working in tandem to create a mutually dependent strategic partnership.

In 1957, my grandfather Ichiro Hatoyama founded the Japan-Soviet Association and in 1965 it was renamed the Japan-Russia Association. Since then, the Japan-Russia Association has organized friendship activities to develop amicable relations and we would like to continue to engage in meaningful activities that would affect internal and external politics. In October, a delegation from the

Japan-Russia Association, which I represent, plans to visit Russia for serious and sincere discussions with respect and mutual understanding to help foster new Japan-Russia relations.

Moreover, as a politician, I advocate environmental issues as a policy. The notion has been widespread in people's minds since the Industrial Revolution that because of economic activities the natural environment could ultimately be destroyed. I want the world to realize that the behavioral principle of setting human economic activities as the highest priority is the cause of various environmental problems. If that behavioral principle continues to be accepted, it will be impossible to find a solution to Earth's environmental issues and human beings will be led to extinction.

I hope that people in both Japan and Russia promote activities to save the Earth hand-in-hand with sharing an awareness of the world's environmental issues while attending to economic growth.

On the occasion of Russia Day, I would like to pray for the peace and prosperity of Russia and its people.



Assistance: A team of 160 rescue workers of the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry helps deliver relief aid after the Great East Japan Earthquake. EMBASSY OF RUSSIA

Long-established ties can help Asia-Pacific

Yoshiro Mori
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-RUSSIA
PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP
LEAGUE

On the occasion of the 21st Russia Day, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the people and government of the Russian Federation.

A new Russia was born on June 12, 1990, and through the various efforts of the Russian people, Russia has built its present prosperity, remains an important actor in the world and continues to grow further, which I sincerely admire.

In the more than 20 years since they became new neighbors, Japan and Russia, have developed their relations in a wide range of fields. Following in the footsteps of my late father, who was committed to the enhancement of the friendship with the Soviet Union throughout his life, I made it my life to help develop the relations with Russia and have worked continuously on expanding Japan-Russia parliamentary exchanges, economic exchanges and cultural exchanges.

The March 11 Great East Ja-

pan Earthquake was a great tragedy for Japan. At the same time, it provided an opportunity to realize the strong Japan-Russia ties, which had been nurtured for a long time.

In the aftermath of the disaster, the Russian government was one of the first to extend its solidarity with Japan, dispatching rescue workers and delivering relief supplies, such as blankets and water, as well as dosimeters for radioactive contamination.

Also, I hear that many Russian people, including prominent figures from various fields as well as the general public, laid flowers and origami cranes, and prayed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Moscow.

It served as powerful encouragement for our country, which was grief-stricken after the disaster of the earthquake and tsunami, that neighboring Russia extended warm sympathy and support. Let me express my heartfelt appreciation.

I think that Japan, in proceeding on its path toward revival, should further reinforce relations with Russia. In recent years, Japan and Russia have promoted mutually beneficial cooperation, especially in the field of energy, such as the Sakhalin Project in the neigh-

boring eastern Siberia and Russian Far East areas, which is obviously important for both countries to further foster such currents in the future.

Last year, I was given the opportunity to attend the opening ceremony of Komatsu's new factory constructed in Yaroslavl and I realized anew that economic relations have a big potential toward further growth in Russia by Japanese companies from wide-ranging industries, not limited to the energy and automotive sectors.

Also, it is still fresh in my mind that I met Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to renew old friendships and to discuss the promotion of Japan and Russia's future relationship.

Currently, Russia is modernizing its economy. I believe that it would be meaningful for both

our countries to enhance the exchange of advanced technologies, such as energy-efficient technology, which is a specialty of Japan.

Furthermore, it is important to further deepen Japan-Russia cooperation in the international arena, as both countries are leading players in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. Especially in recent years, Russia is working energetically for its integration into the Asia-Pacific region and is scheduled to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Vladivostok next year. By sharing its experience with Russia, Japan, which acted as the chair while hosting this conference last year, can help both countries contribute to the development of the Asia-Pacific, a booming region in the world.

As shown above, there is a big potential between Japan and Russia to further expand relations in various fields in the future. In promoting cooperation at all levels, it is very regrettable that the territorial issue between both countries has been left unresolved. I think it is important to repeat frank discussions to settle the problem.

I am determined to make continuous efforts to help further develop the long-established, good relations between Japan and Russia, while overcoming the difficult issues between the two countries.

In conclusion, on this auspicious occasion of Russia Day, I offer my congratulations again to the Russian Federation and its people, and sincerely wish them peace and prosperity.

Congratulations
on the Occasion of
the Russian Federation's
State Sovereignty Declaration Day

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Tokyo Head Office 2-5-1 Kita Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo Tel. 03-3497-2121
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JAPAN TOBACCO INC.

JT Bldg., 2-1, Toranomon 2-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8422, JAPAN
Phone: (03) 3582-3111 Fax: (03) 5572-1463 URL: <http://www.jt.com>