

## Russia national day

## New developments bring new perspectives to our ties

Evgeny Afanasiev  
AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA

I am pleased to address readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of our national holiday, Russia Day. On this day in 1990, the Russian parliament formally declared Russian sovereignty and a state holiday was officially established in 1992 under the initial name Day of Adoption of the Declaration of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation. On Feb. 1, 2002, it was renamed Russia Day. Today I would like to extend my sincere congratulations especially to the Russian community living and working in Japan, thereby contributing to sustainable cultural and economic exchanges between our countries.



This year was marked by a range of political events highly significant to our future development, active involvement into broad international and regional cooperation including with our neighboring countries and Japan in particular. On May 7, Vladimir Putin was inaugurated as the new president of the Russian Federation for the next six-year presidential term after gaining overwhelming support from the voters at the presidential elections. Following the inauguration, the former President Dmitry Medvedev was nominated to the post of prime minister and a new government was formed. As a result of these important events, the political continuity was kept and we can expect further political and socioeconomic reforms to be implemented in a consistent and comprehensive way, which will enable our country to be an active participant in international affairs and to de-

velop an attractive profile for our foreign business partners as well.

With regard to foreign policy, Russia will continue to attribute key importance to the United Nations' central role, fundamental principles of the UN Charter, which requires development of friendly relations among nations based on equality, respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will actively use various organizations for multilateral diplomacy, including newly emerging mechanisms such as BRICS, the Group of 20 and The Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The Russian Foreign Ministry aims at the intensification of collective international efforts to counter global challenges and threats, against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery, international terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime and regional conflicts. Relations with the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries remain an important priority for us. Additional efforts will be focused on strengthening of integration trends within the EEC (Eurasian Economic Community) and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization). Russia-EU relations will remain as another field for diplomatic activities in order to create a common economic and human space between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The Russian policy toward the U.S. will highlight the strategic nature of our cooperation, which should lead our countries to stable and predictable interaction based on principles of equality, noninterference in internal affairs and respect for mutual interests.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Russia is ready to increase its participation in the regional integration process in order to facilitate rapid socioeconomic



Steady leadership: Russia remains led by Dmitry Medvedev (above left), the prime minister, and Vladimir Putin, inaugurated as president on May 7. EMBASSY OF RUSSIA

development of Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East. We will also promote initiatives to build a new architecture of regional security and cooperation based on principles of a collective security system and international law. Russia is interested in further cooperation development within East Asia Summits and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) dialogue partnership mechanisms. Bilateral relations with the key regional players will be deepening on an equal and trustful basis with an emphasis on mutually beneficial collaboration activities.

In this context, relations with Japan are scaled as a high priority for the Russian foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region and world at large.

There is a considerable potential for cooperation with our Japanese partners in dealing with a number of pressing

international issues, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. The Russian-Japanese collaboration within international multilateral forums like APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), ASEAN Regional Security Forum, meetings of ASEAN Defense Ministers and Dialogue Partners provide us with good opportunities for implementation of such a potential. New perspectives for cooperation on regional security issues have opened after our jointing the East Asia Summits and Asia-Europe Dialogue last year. We maintain a close cooperation with Japan in order to resume six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue. Russia and Japan also implement joint projects aimed at promotion of Afghanistan's reconstruction.

We are determined to make further efforts to accelerate the ongoing development of Russian-Japanese relations in a wide

range of areas, as has been stated during recent bilateral meeting between our leaders. This applies to the further strengthening of political dialogue, trade and economic relations with a focus on modernization and innovation activities, energy sector, expansion of cultural and humanitarian exchanges. We are planning a series of important bilateral meetings to be implemented this year: meetings between the leaders of Russia and Japan on the sidelines of major international political events as well as other important exchange of visits.

With regard to the peace treaty, we are determined to continue joint efforts toward mutually acceptable solutions despite the differences in our approaches. In addressing such delicate problems left over from the past, the most important is to create an atmosphere of trust and to accu-



multate a positive background in our bilateral relations.

The Russian-Japanese economic ties demonstrate vivid growth and positive dynam-

ics. Last year, bilateral trade increased by 28.7 percent to \$30.7 billion, reaching pre-crisis levels. A positive trend in investment cooperation continues. The ac-

cumulated Japanese investment in the Russian economy amounted to \$10.2 billion at the end of 2011. Based on these

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## Working for the benefit of Russo-Japanese ties

Yoshiro Mori  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-RUSSIA  
PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP  
LEAGUE

May I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the people of Russia on the occasion of Russia Day. On this day 22 years ago, the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic was made,



and a new Russia that shares our common values — of liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and a respect for human rights — was born.

Russo-Japanese relations have entered a new era, with both countries cooperating in an effort to realize the large possibilities that a fruitful partnership would bring about. In particular, economic relations have been making steady progress, though they were affected by the global financial crisis. In the 1990s trade between our two countries amounted to several billion dollars, whereas now new heights of \$30 billion have been surpassed. Strides have been made in the field of energy, where mutually beneficial cooperation has developed. Today, the total volume of natural gas that Japan imports from Russia amounts to approximately 9 percent of Japan's total natural gas imports.

This year in May, my friend Vladimir Putin was again chosen as president to bear the responsibility of taking the helm of Russia's future course. May I take this opportunity to offer my sincere congratulations for this most festive occasion, and express my dedication to promote the further development of the future-oriented Russo-Japanese relations as the president of the nonpartisan Japan-Russia Parliamentarians' Friendship League.

Our nation welcomes the Russian government's declaration of intent to work on the development of the Far East and Siberia. We also support Russia's interest in the economic integra-

tion of the Asia-Pacific region, which is a region experiencing dynamic economic growth. In addition to economic sectors such as energy, transportation, communications and environment, there are other areas, such as security talks and dialogues as well as cooperation in the high seas, where we can look forward to a new chapter of cooperation. Forging a relationship as partners between Japan and Russia, two key players in the Asia-Pacific region, not only coincides with the strategic interests of the two nations, but will also contribute to the entire Asia-Pacific region's stability and prosperity.

To bring Russo-Japanese relations to a new level, the resolution of the Northern Territories issue, the biggest concern in bilateral relations, is now more necessary than ever. Further development of Russo-Japanese relations across all spectrums should be achieved, and in this regard the issue of the attribution of the Northern Territories should be resolved to pave the way for a peace treaty between Japan and Russia. This would be to the great benefit of both countries.

Last year on March 11, Japan was devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake. The support that Russia had offered Japan was highly encouraging. We ought to strengthen this bond between Japan and Russia that we had discovered at that time, and should work together as true partners in forging the future.

Finally, may I once again offer the people of Russia my sincere congratulations on the occasion of Russia Day, and pray for Russia's peace and prosperity.

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on the Occasion of  
the Russian Federation's  
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# Russia national day

## Neighbors can address challenges together

Kunio Hatoyama  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-RUSSIA  
ASSOCIATION

On the auspicious occasion of Russia Day, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the government and the people of the Russian Federation.



In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, a 160-member rescue team from the Russian Ministry of Civil Defense, Emergencies and Natural Disasters came to Japan and conducted relief operations. Also, the president of the Russia-Japan Association in Novosibirsk

sent us a consolatory letter and made a kind offer to invite the affected children. I feel so grateful for these heartwarming messages from both the public and private sectors, which indicate our friendship based on mutual understanding.

The relations between Japan and Russia date back to 1791, when Daikokuya Kodayu — whose boat drifted to Russia — was granted an audience with Catherine the Great. In 1803, the crew members of the drifting Wakamiya Maru from Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, were granted an audience with Alexander I of Russia. More than 200 years have passed since then. Japan and Russia are the closest of neighbors and have a lot in common. Each of them has a

long history and a culture to be proud of.

Our association was founded in 1965, originally as the Japan-Soviet Association, after Japan and the Soviet Union signed a Joint Declaration in 1956 providing for the end of the state of war, and for the restoration of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Japan, which was achieved by the visit to the USSR by my grandfather Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama, in spite of his illness at that time. In 1992, the association changed its name to the Japan-Russia Association. For 47 years, the association has organized friendship activities in various fields, such as politics, economics, academics, culture, sports and more, covering the overall society to develop mutual

understanding and confidence-building between the people of both countries.

Now and in the future, we have to steadily build up the bilateral reliance, to promote complementary relations and to share in the abundant fruits based on mutual understanding and cooperation.

In the relationship between Japan and Russia, however, there is a non-negligible question that is a constant thorn in the side. Needless to say, it is the issue of the attribution of the Northern Territories. In order to find mutually agreeable solutions, I keenly feel that we need to sincerely address the challenge of this important national concern, while further promoting friendship activities.

## Attaching great importance to deepening our cultural exchanges

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figures, Japan is our second economic partner in the Asia-Pacific region. The total amount of Japanese investments into the Russian economy in 2011 amounted to \$1.2 billion.

Qualitative changes in the business priorities of Japanese companies in Russia can be observed. Their former interest was focused mainly on the purchasing of raw materials and energy supply from our country. Now there is a shift from distribution network creation activities toward their own production facilities, service centers construction and significant expansion of investment activities in real sectors of the Russian economy. At the same time, the future development of bilateral relations in the economic sphere seems to be backed up by innovation and modernization components, which will complement our rapidly developing cooperation in the energy sector.

We attach great importance to deepening not only the political and economic relationships between our countries, but also



Center: The Kremlin has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1990. EMBASSY OF RUSSIA

to further cultural exchanges, including the tradition of annual Russian cultural festivals in Japan and related Japanese cultural events in our country aimed primarily at our young generation. We value active involvement of

Japanese prefectures in the orbit of festival activities: the next festival opening ceremony will be held in Osaka, and Niigata will host the opening events in 2014.

I am pleased to invite all the readers of The Japan Times to

participate actively at those cultural events and to broaden knowledge about modern Russia, as well as to see and feel by themselves the friendly feelings in Russia toward our neighbor Japan and the Japanese people.

### CONGRATULATIONS

on the Occasion of  
the Russian Federation's  
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of  
Their National Day



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