

Russia National Day Special

Rapid growth in numerous spheres

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AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA



On the occasion of the Russian National Holiday — Russia Day — I would like to, first of all, welcome all the readers of The Japan Times and express my appreciation for your attention and interest toward my country. This date, June 12, marks 29 years since the adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian Federation. This day became a holiday in 1992, and in 2002 the day was given its current official title: Russia Day.

Almost three decades have passed since then. Today, the Russian Federation is a modern and vibrant country ready to take up the challenges of time and respond to them with all its energy. We have overcome most difficult economic and social problems. And, we realized that while changing with the world, we should not break away from our own roots, our own history and multinational culture. In modern Russia, greater attention is paid to the most vital domestic development objectives — to achieve economic and technological breakthroughs, and to enhance competitiveness in major spheres that are important for sustainable growth. A new quality of life, social welfare, security and health constitute our main goals and the focus of our policies.

To achieve these goals, certain efforts are made to improve the quality of life in all regions of the Russian Federation and to unlock huge economic and human potential. We keep on implementing comprehensive government programs, substantially increase the investment attractiveness of Russian regions, bring to life ambitious infrastructure projects

aimed at construction and renovation of roads and railway communications, sea ports and broadening the airplane routes coverage. These efforts are also supposed to increase numbers of tourists. There is an enormous interest in our culture, nature and historic monuments. This was proved once again by the success of the FIFA World Cup held in Russia in 2018.

We are open to dialogue in the international arena. Along with our partners we are ready to promote our integration projects and build up business, humanitarian, cultural and scientific ties. Russia provides vast opportunities for international business (our country advanced 31st in the international Doing Business ranking). We are in favor of equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation with all states in the interests of peace and stability on our planet. The main priorities of our foreign policy include strengthening mutual trust, countering global threats, promoting cooperation in economy and trade, education, culture, science and technology. These tenets underpin our work within the U.N., the Commonwealth of Independent States as well as within the Goup of 20, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

We continue promoting closer cooperation within the Union State of Russia and Belarus, including close foreign policy and economic coordination. Together with our integration partners within the Eurasian Economic Union, we will continue creating common markets.



As a major Eurasian country, Russia along with Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation partners has a stake in promoting sustainable and comprehensive growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region. We intend to set deeper ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We also hope that the European Union and major European countries will take constructive steps to put political and economic relations with Russia back on track.

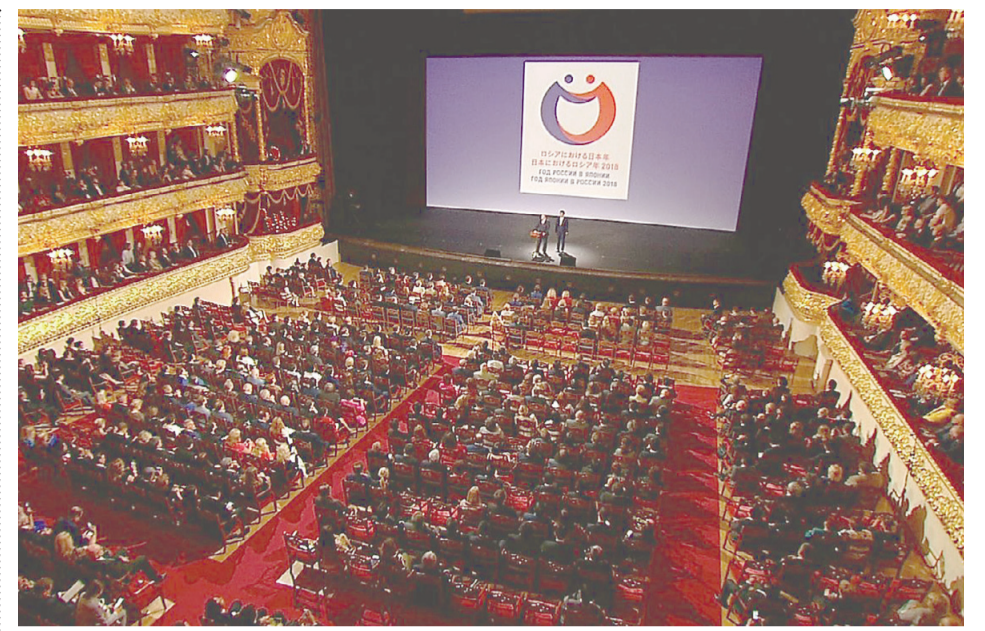
In relations with Japan, regular and energetic dialogue between President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is reinforced by intensive contacts of the two countries' security councils, the foreign and defense ministries, including the "two-plus-two" format, active exchanges between national parliaments, ruling parties and regions as well as strong interaction in the Russian-Japanese Intergovernmental Commission on trade and economy issues. We note the gradual growth of mutual trade. By the end of last year turnover increased 18 percent and surpassed \$20 billion.

We continue joint work on implementation of the Plan of Cooperation in eight

areas, which was proposed by Abe, and a list of priority projects introduced by the Russian side. Japanese entrepreneurs are investing in many sectors of the Russian economy, participating in both the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum and the Eastern Economic Forum.

There is also much potential for enhancing energy cooperation. Gazprom, Mitsui & Co. and Mitsubishi Corp. are building a third technological line at the LNG plant as part of the Sakhalin-2 project. The possible involvement of our Japanese partners in the Arctic LNG-2, the Baltic liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects and the construction of an LNG terminal in the Kamchatka Peninsula is being studied. Russian companies are developing neutron detectors to identify damaged fuel to mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant.

Cooperation in transport and infrastructure is expanding. Last December, Japanese companies purchased a 10 percent stake in the company that is managing the upgrade of Khabarovsk Novy Airport. Joint trial runs of container shipments via the Trans-Siberian Railway



Above: The opening ceremony of the Cross Years of Russia and Japan at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, May 2018. Left: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Vladimir Putin at a meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN-Russia Summit in Singapore in November. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE

were carried out. If they become regular, supplies of Japanese goods to developing countries via Russian territory will increase. Transport development along the Northern Sea Route for LNG exports to Japan and other states in the Asia-Pacific region look promising.

However, we believe that the potential for bilateral cooperation in economy is still far from being completely released. Therefore, together with our Japanese partners we shall work on the development of more ambitious plans to expand economic ties in key areas: from trade and investment to technological cooperation, education and humanitarian exchanges.

Bilateral cooperation in the cultural, educational, scientific and humanitarian sphere is developing rapidly. "Russian Year" in Japan and "Japanese Year" in Russia, launched last May by Putin and Abe, have contributed to better understanding between our people. The program included over 400 different events held in our countries.

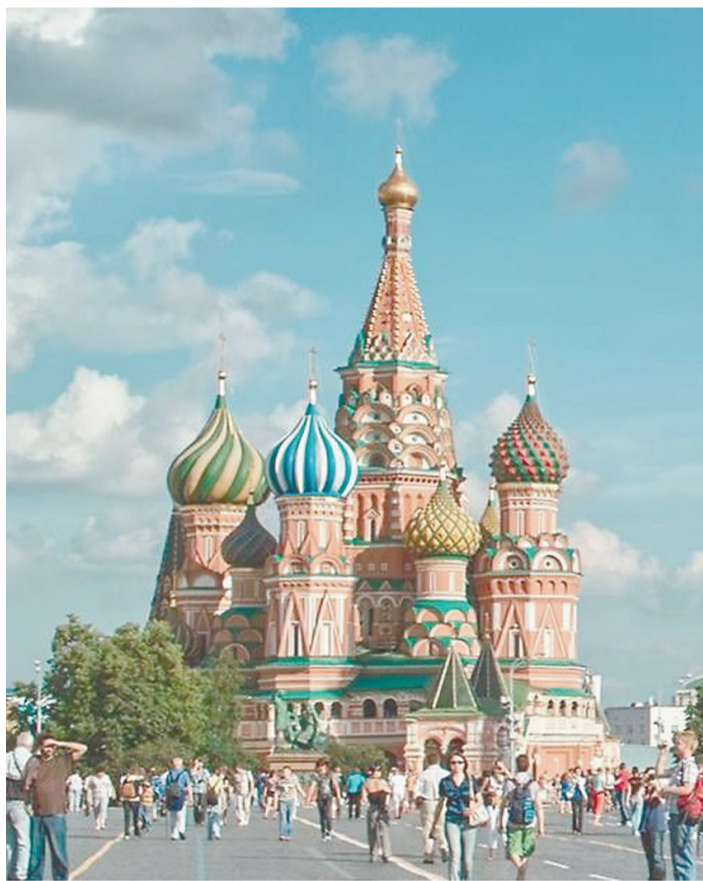
Russia-Japan relations play a significant part not only for bilateral interests, but also in terms of stability and sustainable development of the entire Asia-Pacific region

and globally. We extend our cooperation in security agendas, along with countering emerging threats and challenges such as terrorism, drugs and cybercrime.

Due to the agreement between our leaders, we continue joint work to create proper conditions for reaching mutually acceptable solutions of the peace treaty problem between Russia and Japan. We strongly believe that the significant step in this direction is to ensure the long-term and comprehensive development of Russian-Japanese relations at a higher-quality level.

I would like to sincerely congratulate all my fellow compatriots and citizens of Russia currently staying in Japan on Russia Day. I am convinced that the stable and progressive development of Russian-Japanese cooperation in an entire range of areas will strengthen trust between the people of both countries and will be an important factor in tackling pressing regional and global issues.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



St. Basil's Cathedral in the Red Square, Moscow. It was built from 1555 to 1561 on orders from Czar Ivan the Terrible. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE

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to the People
of
the Russian Federation
on the Occasion
of
Their National Day

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