

Russia to Press Japan on Kuril Deposits

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia will call on Japan to jointly develop oil and natural gas resources near the disputed Kuril island chain north of Japan, the Nikkei business daily said.

Viktor Ishayev, Russia's presidential envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District, told the Nikkei in an interview that Russia would propose to jointly develop deposits off one of the islands in the Pacific known in Japan as Kunashiri.

The project would be part of the economic cooperation focus that the two nations agreed in February to discuss and could be brought up in high-level bilateral talks to be held this year, the paper said.

Still, Russia may not restrict partnering with Japan to develop natural resources near the disputed islands. Ishayev told the Nikkei that other countries could be interested in development if Japanese firms and investments do not make their way to the islands.

Kunashiri is part of an island chain called the southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern

Territories in Japan, which the Soviet Union seized after it declared war on Japan in the closing days of World War II.

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