

Japan Wants to End War Over Kurils

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Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda said Tuesday that he is set on resolving a longstanding territorial dispute with Russia over the Southern Kuril Islands, RIA-Novosti reported.

"We'll continue to make steady and determined efforts to move ahead with negotiations," Noda said, at an annual rally in Japan calling for the return of all four of the Far Eastern islands.

The four islands — which Russia calls the Southern Kurils and Japan calls the Northern Territories — have been the subject of a territorial dispute since the end of World War II. As a result, the countries never signed a peace treaty to end the war.

Last year, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev set off a diplomatic tempest by traveling to the islands in the first-ever visit by a Russian leader. He has also said Russia would increase its military presence there.

Japan's then-Prime Minister Naoto Kan called the visit "inexcusable rudeness."

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