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Japan's Abe Hopes to Meet With Putin at Asia-Europe Summit

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Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks during a high-level summit on strengthening international peace operations on the sidelines of the the 69th United Nations General Assembly at U.N. Headquarters in New York.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Wednesday he hopes to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the upcoming Asia-Europe summit.

"I would like to create the opportunity for talks with President Putin," Abe told reporters before leaving for the multilateral summit in Milan.

A Kremlin official said last week that a bilateral meeting at ASEM was possible. Abe and Putin are already expected to have talks on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific summit next month in Beijing.

The Japanese and Russian leaders met five times in Abe's first year in office. But Abe is now in a delicate position, trying to improve ties with the energy-exporting giant while also staying in step with the West on sanctions over Russia's involvement in the Ukraine conflict.

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