

Russia-Japan Relations Over Disputed Islands Unchanged After Crimea — Putin

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President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe before their meeting at the APEC summit in Beijing, on Nov. 9, 2014.

Russia's relations with Japan over disputed Pacific Islands have not changed following Moscow's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday.

Tokyo and Moscow have been involved in a decades-old dispute over islands north of Hokkaido, known as the Kurils in Russia and referred to as the Northern Territories in Japan.

"Our relations with Japan ... concerning this territorial issue have not changed at all in connection with Crimea," Putin said during his annual televised call-in show.

Putin said he was ready to discuss the issue but blamed Japan for a lack of dialogue.

In line with the United States and the European Union, Japan imposed visa bans on a number

of Russians after Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula last year.

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