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Russia Has 'No Territorial Conflicts with Japan,' Says Putin

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Russian President Vladimir Putin plays with a dog before his interview with the Nippon Television Network Corporation and the Yomiuri Shimbun prior to his visit to Japan and meeting with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia. **Kremlin Press Service**

Russia has "no territorial conflicts with Japan," President Vladimir Putin has claimed in an interview with Japanese media.

Speaking in an interview with Japanese broadcaster Nippon TV, Putin said that Russia was "ready to discuss" ownership of the disputed Kuril Islands.

"Japan believes that we have territorial disagreements,"⊠Putin said, implying the territorial dispute was of greater concern to Japan⊠than Russia.

Both Japan and Russia claim the Kuril Islands which include⊠Iturup, Kunashir, Shikotan and Habomai, in the Sea of Okhotsk.

The islands, which have a population of 19,434 people, are⊠currently under Russian

jurisdiction.

During the interview, the Russian president called for Moscow and Tokyo to improve cooperation on trade and security issues in, "an atmosphere of trust, friendship and cooperation."

Putin also said the lack of a defined peace treaty between Japan and Russia was an "anachronism pulled out of the past."

The Russian president gave the interview before a planned visit to Japan on Dec. 15, when he is scheduled to meet with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

The trip is already tinged with controversy with Putin refusing to accept an Akita dog as a gift from the Japanese government.

The dog had been intended as a companion for another Akita, Yume, which Putin received as a gift from Japan in 2012.

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