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Putin Proposes to Sign a Peace Deal This Year With Japan's Abe

By Reuters

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Russian President Vladimir Putin, sitting on a stage alongside Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, proposed on Wednesday that the two men sign a peace treaty by the end of this year.

The two countries are in dispute over a chain of Pacific islands and as a result have still not formally ended their World War II hostilities.

"An idea has just come into my head," Putin said, turning towards Abe, during a question and answer session at an economic forum in the Russian city of Vladivostok.

"Let's conclude a peace treaty before the end of this year, without any pre-conditions."

Putin said security in the region was a key issue and that Russia was concerned by a move to establish a U.S. missile defense system there.

Related article: Putin's Arms Buildup Puts Abe on Defensive in Islands Dispute

Japan decided last year it would expand its ballistic missile defence system with U.S.-made ground-based Aegis radar stations and interceptors.

"This is all the subject of negotiations... We have been negotiating for 70 years," Putin said.

"Shinzo said let's change approaches. Okay," Putin said, before proposing they sign a peace treaty.

Abe, who said on Monday that talks with Putin were moving towards a peace treaty, did not give a response.

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