

Russia and Japan to better future

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Modern Japan is one of the most developed countries all over the world. Obviously collaboration with Japan is very important factor in economical, social, cultural and political life of Russia.

Russian foreign policy concept approved on 28th on July in 2000 year by President V. Putin is saying that “Russian Federation is coming forward for stable relations development with Japan, for achievement of really kind neighborhood responding to national interests of both countries”.

Recently elected Democratic Party of Japan Leader Yukio Hatoyama said: “Until the present day in relations of Japan and Russia is hidid huge potential and don’t use it will be a great loss for both nations. We have to make effort for sooner establishment of confidence relations with Russia and act but don’t forget about settlement of existing between us undecided problem”.

However many experts think that notorious “territorial question” shouldn’t stay on the development way of economical, cultural and political intercommunications of Russia and Japan.

Russian Federation as the sovereign country which proclaimed democratic and market reforms was appeared in the world in 1991 and it has stipulated principally different relationship character to the Far-Eastern neighbor – Japan. With the dissolution of Soviet Union and with the beginning of reforms in Russia in 90th the reason of military-political and ideological confrontation as inevitable consequence of previous Soviet-American rivalry with Japan was disappeared. Side by side with this especially in the time of forming of multipolar world Russia became to look at Japan like on great economically independent State with the growing potential of political influence in international relations.

Japanese Parliament was one of the first countries who has admitted Russia in December of 1991 as a State which is a continuer of Soviet Union and claimed about supporting of Russian reforms of 1990th like a long strategically course.

Great event on the way of set relations going between Japan and Russia was official visit of First Russian president Boris Yeltsin in Tokyo in October of 1993. As the result Tokio declaration about Russian-Japanese relations was signed. It was the first complex document which has defined principal bases of relations between new Russia and Japan. And at the same time it was signed more than 50 different agreements and documents about collaboration in different spheres.

In Tokyo declaration was formed the intention to interact in the construction of new world order and fully normalization of Japanese-Russian relations and also to deepen collaboration in disarmament sphere and to develop dialog and interaction in other spheres.

Tokyo agreements have opened many ways for further activization of Japanese-Russian relations in many directions. In particular important steps in development of economic collaboration were made.

In November of 1994 both countries have come to creation of Japanese-Russian Interparliament commission by trade-economical issues. This commission is headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan and vice Prime minister of Russia.

1st – 2nd November 1997 in Krasnoyarsk was carried out first in the history of Japanese-Russian relations informal meeting of two State leaders. On this meeting R. Hashimoto and B. Yeltsin formulated new principals of Japanese-Russian relations: mutual faith, mutual advantages, long duration relations, close economical collaboration. Great attention was done to problem of Peace treaty. Leaders noted necessity to get this knot untied which darken our relations and arranged to make all efforts to conclude a Peace treaty based on Tokyo declaration till 2000. But unfortunately until the present day both sides haven’t solved territorial issues.

Most important negotiations in economic sphere was done by Yoshiro Mori and Vladimir Putin on 3rd-5th September 2000 . During this talks all previous contacts by economical questions were summarized. Thus during this negotiations Program of deepen collaboration in trade-economical field was signed. This document determines the main directions in economic sphere of Japanese-Russian co-operation: encouragement of mutual trade and Japanese investment in Russian economy, collaboration in energy resources development of Siberia and Far-East for energy supply stabilization in Asian-Pacific region, transportation, science and technologies, nuclear energy, space exploration, assistance of Russian economy integration in the world economy, Russian economical reforms support including training of personnel for market economy etc.

Russian President Vladimir Putin confirmed deep interest of Russia in activization of economical collaboration with Japan and offered series of new huge ideas which could give big advantages to Japan and Russia and could change radically and scale up economic collaboration of our countries. Here are some of them:

1. Construction of Energy bridge between Russia and Japan for transportation of electric power from Sakhalin electric power stations and other Far-East regions of Russia.
2. Gas pipelines construction to Japan and other countries of Asian-Pacific region from gas deposits in Eastern part of Russia.
3. Construction of tunnels Japan-Sakhalin, which could connect Japan with Europe by railway through the TransSiberian track line.

In general we can say that economic relations of Japan and Russia are in a favorable condition and they're developing to the mutual advantage collaboration.

Former ambassador of Japan in Russia Issei Nomura noted: "When we're talking about relations between our countries, we could talk about relations in narrow and wide meaning. In narrow meaning this is our double-sided treaties, exchanges etc." He also noted the raising of economic connections, increasing quantity of delegations from both sides.

But if we're talking about relations in wide meaning ambassador expressed following considerations: "I mean our double-sided collaboration in global contemporaneity issues. Russia and Japan are carrying huge responsibility for safety preservation, humanity prosperity etc. But there is new issues in the world appeared all the time: regional – Iran, Iraq, Northern Korea and global for example problems connected with ecology. They must to be solved. In regional issues fortunately I have to notice that Japan and Russian positions are generally concur.

In the "Cold war" times we had different political views. At those days about 95 percent of our contacts were about relations in the narrow sense of the word. Today we are seriously involved in discussion of world level issues. This is positive difference in comparison to the last period".

Also we have to mention huge quantity of forums, conferences, National culture days, which definitely influence on closing in of our States. For example we can take Russian-Japanese investment forum conducted annually in Saint-Petersburg (photo 8); annual mayors meeting of Siberia, Far-East of Russia and western coast of Japan cities, carrying out in brother-cities Khabarovsk Niigata (photo 4, 1), Russian culture Days in Japan and Japanese culture Days in Russia, also there is conference of Japanese club "Student science society" carrying out in Moscow State Institute of International Relations devoted to problem of multilateral development of Russian-Japanese relations: "Russia and Japan: half century on the knife edge. Mutually beneficial collaboration or meaningless isolation?" (photo 10).

Conference participants make sure that our economical connections activity level is very high: only for few last years commodity circulation has grown from few billion dollars to almost 20 billion. Therefore "meaningless isolation" declared on agenda and conference name even like a hypothetical version of probability equals zero and has broken away itself already in the early start of conference.

There is a Society “Russia-Japan” acts in Russia. It’s an All-Russian social organization founded in 1991 as a successor of Society “USSR-Japan” existed since 1958.

The main aim of “Russia-Japan” Society is to assist development and consolidation of good-neighbourly relations between Russian and Japan nations, business connections between Russia and Japan, meet Russian and Japanese society with both countries history, culture and other spheres of live.

Society has branches in most regions of Russian Federation.

“Russia-Japan” Society accept in Russia representatives of social, business, cultural and science spheres of Japan organize business trips of Russian social leaders and businessmen in Japan take part in publishing and translation activities, child, youth and cultural exchanges, support spreading in Russia Japanese language programs, traditional Japanese arts, publish its own information bulletin distributed by e-mail.

Also Russia and Japan have reached an agreement about visa simplification for some category of citizens both countries. Japanese foreign-policy department source informed that visa giving out procedure will be speeded up for Russian citizens. It’ll be easier to get multiple business visa. Short stay duration will be increased to 90 days.

About cultural contacts I’d like to apply again to words of past ambassador in Russia Issei Nomura: “Theatrical and dramatic arts we have learned by Chekhov. Big theatre ballet, Kirovsky theatre orchestra and other different Moscow theatres very often play in Japan. Repeat again: Japanese people have great interest to that. Here is ground for cultures enrichment. But everything needs good advertising and then Japanese will try to get Russian culture to know and would like to see Russia by own eye”. Of no small importance ambassador consider development of tourists and students exchange because many beauties of Russia are unknown and inaccessible to Japanese. “It’s necessary to improve tourist’s conditions, construct more hotels etc. Mutual efforts are needed for this. But now it’s needed in generally doing more propaganda”.

Constantly are carried out negotiations by the energy supply issues, peaceful atom, pipelines construction. All this have to assist to adjustment of dialog between our countries.

As a whole we could say that to the present day Japan and Russia have created strong conditions for establishment of partnership relations. It could be considered a serious achievement of both countries especially if we take in account that during a long time after the Second World War relations between them characterized with the high level of estrangement, suspiciousness, distrust and confrontation.

I’m absolutely sure that in future Japanese-Russian relations will be going in the positive direction to the side of mutual collaboration and maintenance of strong partnership relations.