

The Script for the Key Note Speech

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Good afternoon, everyone! My name is Shintaro Kono, a sophomore of Tokai University. Today, I'm really honored to be here as a member of the Japanese-Russian Student Forum 2009, and appreciate having the opportunity to make a speech on the relationship between Japan and Russia in the future. First of all, I would like to show my gratitude to all of faculties and staffs who spent a lot of time and effort to hold this forum. Thank you so much.

Japan and Russia have built the relationship since Japan became open to the world in the Edo era. However, we have gone through some tragedies like Japanese-Russo War and World War II. And now, we are facing the serious problem, Kuril Islands issue. But, regardless of those problems, the roles that are expected to be played by our countries are really important, especially in the field of economy, environment and energy, and security.

First, the economy in the world is really unstable because of the corruption of the American single-pole structure. So, Japan and Russia are expected to play an important role to stabilize the economy, especially in the Asia-Pacific Region. For instance, we should cooperate to make a new economic sphere in this region, or to make an Asian key currency. And I think that the economic cooperation between Japan and Russia has positive influence not only on this region but also on our own economy. For example, as the economic system is improved in Russia, more and more Japanese businesses will expand into Russian market and provide good products or service to Russian people because the market in Russia that still maintains its purchasing power is really attractive for them. Also, if the Russian government creates the economic environment that follows the international custom, the Japanese government can recommend Russia as a new member of World Trade Organization. Therefore, it is clear that the economic cooperation between Japan and Russia will be beneficial for both countries and the entire Asia-Pacific region.

Second, Japan and Russia have the potential to solve the environmental problems such as global warming and marine pollution in this region. In order to attack the environmental problems, most important factors are abundant natural resources like crude oil and natural gas in Russia and highly advanced technology in Japan. For instance, companies in Japan and Russia will be able to develop the natural resources in the Far East area together, reducing the burden on the environment. Of course, this

development of the Far East area will stimulate the local economies in Russia, and also it can diversify Japanese energy supply. Moreover, Japan and Russia share many oceans such as Sea of Japan, Okhotsk Sea, and North Pacific. Therefore, we are responsible for the protection of those seas and marine life as well.

Finally, the security is one of the most emergent problems in the Asia-Pacific region since North Korea declared to start the development of nuclear weapons. However, the world aims to promote the nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament. So, we can not overlook such action of North Korea that is quite opposite to the situation in the world as major developed countries in this region. If North Korea has nuclear power, Japan and Russia, which are neighboring countries of North Korea, will be in great danger. Therefore, we should cooperate to persuade North Korea to come back to the six-country party, and seek the peaceful solution of the security problem.

As stated above, the roles that are expected to be played by Japan and Russia are really important, and I'm sure that we have the potential to fulfill them. However, it is not until two countries work together that we can solve the problems efficiently. And unfortunately, we are not cooperating enough. So, how can we cooperate more effectively and make better relationship?

I believe that there are two tasks to be addressed in order to make a good cooperation. The one thing that we should do is to solve the territorial problem. We have had the unique and historical problem, Northern Territories issue, and it has been the obstacle on the way to conclude the peace treaty between Japan and Russia. And so far, two countries have kept claiming its own opinion, and have never made a major breakthrough to the problem. The Japanese government requires Russia to return all of the Kuril Islands, although the Russian government is going to give two of them on the basis of Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration. The political leaders of both countries say that they are seeking "a creative approach" to the issue, but what is "a creative approach" or what does "creative" mean? As long as they claim just their own opinions, there is not "creative solution". All that they should do is not to continue the emotional claim on the basis of the past tragedies but to discuss on how we can manage the territory in the best way for the people in Japan and Russia. Of course, there are a lot of Japanese people who were displaced from Kuril Islands after the World War II. On the other hand, there are many Russian people who live on those islands. So, the most important thing is to think about a real "creative approach" to the problem that can make both of Japanese and Russian happy. So, I would like the officials in this auditorium to make more opportunities to discuss on such a new solution at high-level and grass-root level.

The other thing that we should do is to increase the number of people traveling

between the two countries. According to the data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, just 150,000 people traveled between the countries in 2008. This number is approximately one of 33rd of the number between Japan and the U.S. However, the number between Japan and Russia should be larger than what it is in terms of geopolitics. Furthermore, the increase of the number can lead to the promotion of mutual understanding our nationalities, culture, and values. And, I think that there are two levels of flow of the people. The first thing is the level of the government officials, so-called high-level conference. In order to build better relationship between two countries, it is necessary for a government to have a lot of opportunities to talk with one of its partner country. I'm sure that the flow of government officials will be promoted in the near future because Japan-Russia Action Plan declared to promote this kind of Flow of people in 2003. The other thing is the flow of people at grass-root level like this student forum. I believe that in order to promote mutual understanding, more opportunities to talk about our future should be provided not only at official level but also at the level of young people like us who bear the future. So, let's enjoy these three days in the forum, and talk about our own future! Thank you for listening.