

The Government of Japan’s Position and Basic Policy on the Northern Territories Issue

The absence of a peace treaty between Japan and Russia for more than 70 years after the end of World War II is an unnatural state of affairs and thus it is necessary to resolve the Northern Territories issue and conclude a peace treaty.

The Northern Territories, which consist of Etorofu Island, Kunashiri Island, Shikotan Island, and the Habomai Islands, have been handed down from generation to generation by Japanese people, and are inherent territories of Japan, which have never been part of a foreign country.

The Four Northern Islands have remained illegally occupied by Russia up until the present day. Since

the issue still remains unresolved although more than 70 years have passed since the end of World War II, Japan and Russia have yet to conclude a peace treaty.

The Government of Japan upholds the policy to conclude a peace treaty through the resolution of the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands.

August 1945 Invasion and Occupation by Soviet forces

On August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union, currently the Russian Federation, in violation of the Neutrality Pact that was still in force between Japan and the Soviet Union, opened war on Japan. Even after Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration and made clear its intention to surrender, Soviet forces occupied all of the Four Northern Islands (i.e., Etorofu Island, Kunashiri Island, Shikotan Island, and the Habomai Islands) from August 28 until September 5, 1945.

At the time, approximately 17 thousand Japanese resided in the Four Northern Islands. All of them were forcibly deported by 1948.

At the international conference where the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed in September 1951, the Soviet Union refused to sign the treaty, after making a dissenting address.

The illegal occupation of the Four Northern Islands by the Russian Federation continues still now. Due to this territorial issue, Japan and the Russian Federation have not concluded a peace treaty.

The Government of Japan continues negotiations with the Russian Government to conclude a peace treaty with Russia through the resolution of the Northern Territories issue.



Northern Territories

consist of Etorofu Island, Kunashiri Island, Shikotan Island and the Habomai Islands, located in the Sea of Okhotsk, close to the north-east of Hokkaido's Nemuro Peninsula. Kaigara Island, one of the Habomai Islands, is the closest to the main island of Hokkaido, located only 3.7km from Cape Nosappu in Nemuro City. Even Etorofu Island, the furthest to the north-east, is only 144.5km from Cape Nosappu. Etorofu Island is the largest of Japan's outlying islands, while Kunashiri is the second largest. The Habomai Islands are part of Nemuro City. The Northern Territories are adjacent to Nemuro City, Betsukai Town, Nakashibetsu Town, Shibetsu Town and Rausu Town.

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- Oct. 1993** **President Yeltsin’s Visit to Japan**
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- Apr. 1998** **The Summit Meeting in Kawana**
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The two leaders welcome that the negotiations on a peace treaty have been conducted energetically under their determination expressed jointly in Singapore, and share the view to continue to advance the negotiations.

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- Feb. 7, 1855 (Ansei 1)**
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Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact
- Aug. 1945 (Showa 20)**
Acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration
- Sep. 2**
Signing the Instrument of Surrender Establishment of GHQ

- Sep. 8, 1951 (Showa 26)**
Signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty
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I History of the determination of territory

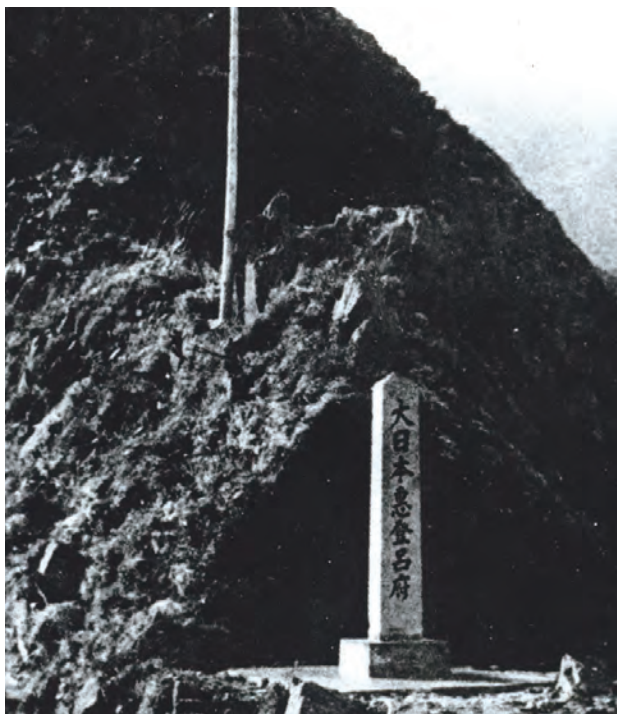
In the Edo Period, the principality of Matsumae defined the Four Northern Islands as part of its own domain as early as the beginning of 17th century, and gradually established control over the Islands. In 1855, the border between Japan and Russia was legally demarcated between Etorofu Island and Uruppu Island. Since then, the Four Northern Islands, consisting of Etorofu Island, Kunashiri Island, Shikotan Island and the Habomai Islands, have never been a territory of any other country. This section explains the history of the determination of territory between Japan and Russia.

1644 –

In the Edo Period, Japan comes to realize the existence of the Four Northern Islands, and gradually establishes control.

Japan came to realize the existence of the Four Northern Islands in the Edo Period. The Edo Shogunate (the government), then ruling Japan, compiled a map of Japan “*Shouho-okuni-ezu* (Map of Japan from the Shoho Period)”, where appear the names of such islands as “Kunashiri” and “Etohoru (Etorofu).” A number of Japanese sailed to this region. The principality of Matsumae defined the Four Northern Islands as part of its own domain as early as the beginning of 17th century and gradually established control over the Islands.

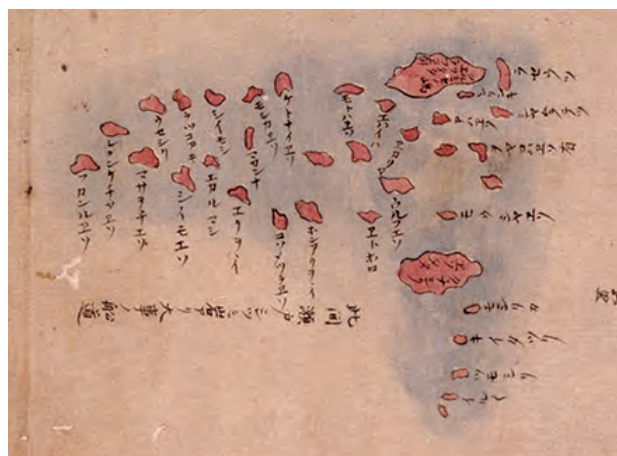
Thus, Japan already had a close association with the Four Northern Islands before Russia began exploring the Kurile Islands in the early 18th century. As the Shogunate ruled over the Four Northern Islands and placed watching posts on Etorofu Island and other islands to its south in order to prevent the incursion by foreigners no islands to the south of Uruppu Island have ever been under Russian control. In 1798, the Edo Shogunate erected a marker that read “Etorofu, Japan” to display that the island was part of Japan’s territory.



A photo of the marker of Etorofu Island
[Repository] Chishima-Habomai-Kyojusha-Renmei



Shouho-okuni-ezu
[Repository] National Museum of Japanese History

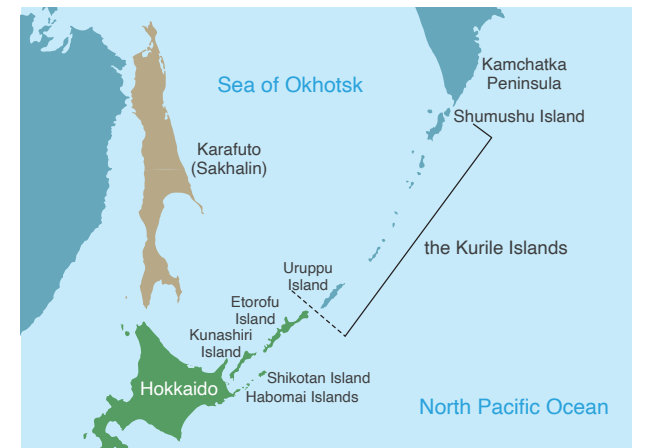


Shouho-okuni-ezu (partial enlargement)
[Repository] National Museum of Japanese History

1855

Conclusion of the Treaty of Commerce, Navigation and Delimitation between Japan and Russia: the border between the two countries is determined peacefully to be between Etorofu Island and Uruppu Island.

The Treaty of Commerce, Navigation and Delimitation between Japan and Russia confirmed the border between the two countries as had been naturally formed between Etorofu Island and Uruppu Island. In this way, the two countries achieved agreement in a peaceful and friendly manner.

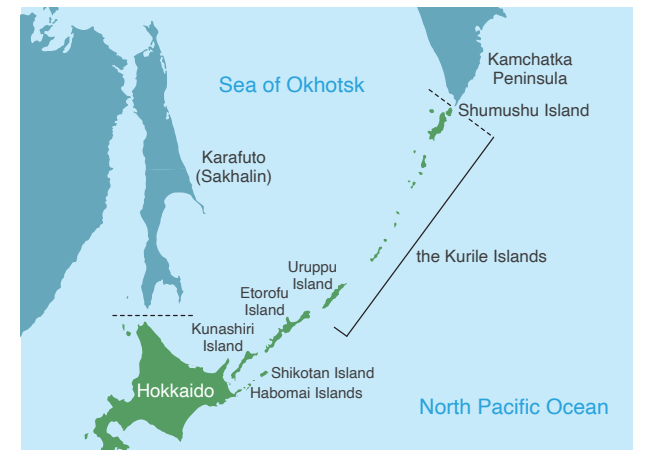


The border based on the Treaty of Commerce, Navigation and Delimitation between Japan and Russia

1875

Conclusion of the Treaty for the Exchange of Sakhalin for the Kurile Islands: the Kurile Islands, from Shumushu Island to Uruppu Island, become part of Japan.

As a result of the Treaty for the Exchange of Sakhalin for the Kurile Islands, the rights to the Kuril Islands were ceded from Russia to Japan, in exchange for the cession of the rights to the island of Karafuto (Sakhalin). This treaty enumerated as the Kurile Islands 18 islands from Shumushu Island in the north to Uruppu Island in the south, without reference to the names of the Four Northern Islands (Etorofu Island, Kunashiri Island, Shikotan Island, Habomai Islands). This fact indicates that the Four Northern Islands, being clearly differentiated from the Kurile Islands, have been inherent territories of Japan, which have never been part of a foreign country.

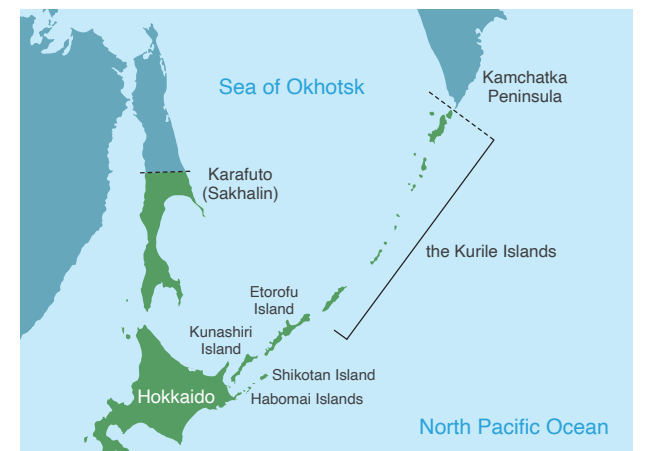


The border based on the Treaty for the Exchange of Sakhalin for the Kurile Islands

1905

Conclusion of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty : a part of the Karafuto (Sakhalin) Island lying to the south of 50 degrees north latitude is ceded to Japan.

In the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, concluded after the end of the war between Japan and Russia, Russia ceded to Japan a part of Karafuto (Sakhalin) Island lying to the south of 50 degrees north latitude.



The border based on the Portsmouth Peace Treaty

1603
(Keicho 8)

Establishment of
Edo Shogunate

1633
(Kan'ei 10)

National Isolation Edict

February 7, 1855
(Ansei 1)

Signing the Treaty of Commerce,
Navigation and Delimitation
between Japan and Russia

1868
(Keio 3)

the Decree for the Restoration
of Imperial Rule
(End of Edo Shogunate)

May 7, 1875
(Meiji 8)

Signing of the Treaty for the Exchange
of Sakhalin for the Kurile Islands

1917
(Taisho 6)

the Russian Revolution
(Establishment of the Soviet Union)

2 Life in the Four Northern Islands

Before World War II, approximately 17,000 Japanese people resided in the Four Northern Islands. There were a village (Shikotan Village) on Shikotan Island, two towns (Tomari and Ruyobetsu Towns) on Kunashiri Island, and three villages (Rubetsu, Shana, and Shibetoro Villages) on Etorofu Island, all of which had government offices. The Habomai Islands belonged to Habomai Village (current Nemuro City). Each island had stations, post offices, police stations, elementary schools, among other establishments. With rich fishery resources in the waters surrounding those islands, fishery industries flourished, while forestry and mining were also conducted on Kunashiri and Etorofu Islands.

Habomai Shoto Islands



Canning plant on Shibotsu Island



Sports meeting in Taraku Elementary School

Kunashiri Island



Downtown Scenery



Post office in Tomari Village

Shikotan Island



Processing of blue whales



Workers at a laver plant

Etorofu Island



Downtown Scenery



Big catch of cods at Rubetsu Port

3 Rise of the Territorial Dispute

On August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union, in violation of the Neutrality Pact that was still in force between Japan and the Soviet Union, opened war against Japan. Even after Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration, making clear its intent to surrender, the Soviet Union continued its offensive against Japan and occupied the Four Northern Islands. At the end of the war, 3,124 households, or 17,291 Japanese citizens, lived on the Four Northern Islands. Around half of them were immediately forced to flee their homes, and all were forcibly deported by 1948.

August 1941

Atlantic Charter

The Allies clarified the principle of seeking no territorial aggrandizement.

The leaders of the US and the UK signed the Atlantic Charter to state the common principles of the Allies, among which was to seek no territorial aggrandizement. The Soviet Union also joined the Atlantic Charter on September 24, 1941.

November 1943

Confirmation by the Allies of the common principles, including the principle to seek no territorial aggrandizement.

In the Cairo Declaration, the Allies confirmed the principles of the Atlantic Charter, including the principle to seek no territorial aggrandizement and stated “Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed.” It is clear in the light of historical facts that the Four Northern Islands were never “taken” by violence and greed by Japan.



The Cairo Conference (photo: THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN)

February 1945

Signing of the Yalta Agreement by the leaders of the US, the UK and the Soviet Union.

The Agreement included the handing over of the Kurile Islands to the Soviet Union, along with the return of the southern part of Sakhalin to the Soviet Union.

The leaders of the US, the UK and the Soviet Union signed the Yalta Agreement, which included the handing over of the Kurile Islands to the Soviet Union, along with the return of the southern part of Sakhalin to the Soviet Union. But the Yalta Agreement was merely a statement by then leaders of the Allies as to principles of the postwar settlement, and was not a determination by the Allies concerned of the final settlement of territorial problems. Furthermore, Japan, not being a party to this agreement, is in no way bound by it.



The Yalta Conference (photo: Kyodo News)

Neutrality Pact between Japan and the Soviet Union (April 1941)

Under this Pact, Japan and the Soviet Union undertook the obligation to mutually respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other. The Pact was to remain in force for a period of five years, and unless either Party notifies the denunciation of the Pact a year before the expiration of that period, it was to be considered to be automatically extended for the next period of five years. The Soviet Union made the notification of denunciation in April 1945, as a result of which the Pact remained in force until April 1946.

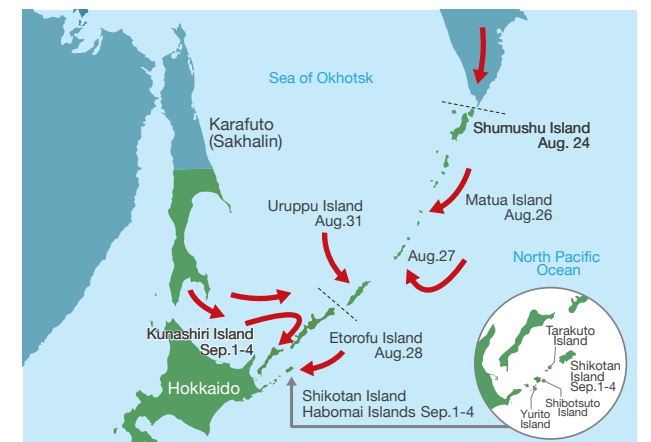
Potsdam Declaration

The Potsdam Declaration of July 1945 indicated that the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out, and that Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as the Allies determine. This declaration did not determine the final settlement of territorial problems. The Soviet Union joined the Potsdam Declaration on August 8, 1945. Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration on August 14 of the same year.

1945 –

Opening of war against Japan by the Soviet Union: continuation of offensive and occupation of the Four Northern Islands even after Japan makes clear its intent to surrender

On August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union, in violation of the Neutrality Pact that was still in force between Japan and the Soviet Union, opened war against Japan. Even after Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration on August 14 of the same year, making clear its intent to surrender, the Soviet Union continued its offensive against Japan and occupied the Four Northern Islands from August 28, 1945 to September 5, 1945. (The Japanese army did not put up any resistance to the occupation, and it was carried out without violence.)

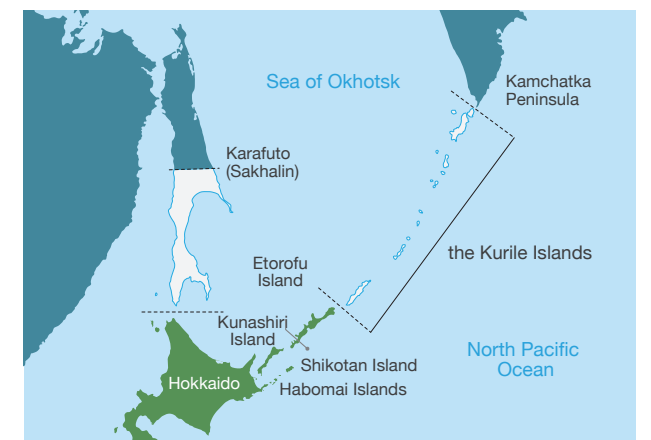


Map of the Soviet Union invasion

September 1951

Signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty: renunciation by Japan of the Kurile Islands, which do not include the Four Northern Islands, and the southern part of Sakhalin

Under the San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan renounced all right, title and claim to the Kurile Islands and the southern part of Sakhalin over which Japan acquired sovereignty as a consequence of the Treaty of Portsmouth. However, as made clear by the Treaty of Commerce, Navigation and Delimitation between Japan and Russia and the Treaty for the Exchange of Sakhalin for the Kurile Islands, “the Kurile Islands” is a term referring to Uruppu Island and other islands to the north, which do not include the Four Northern Islands. In an Aide-Memoire dated September 7, 1956, the US Department of State clearly says “The United States has reached the conclusion after careful examination of the historical facts that the islands of Etorofu and Kunashiri (along with the Habomai Islands and Shikotan which are a part of Hokkaido) have always been part of Japan proper and should in justice be acknowledged as under Japanese sovereignty”. Furthermore, the Soviet Union, not being a state party to the San Francisco Peace Treaty, is not in a position to interpret the treaty.



The border based on the San Francisco Peace Treaty

1939 (Showa 14)
Decralation of World War II

April 13, 1941 (Showa 16)
Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact

December 7
Decralation of the Pacific War

July 1945 (Showa 20)
the Potsdam Decralation

September 2
Signing the Instrument of Surrender
Establishment of GHQ

September 8, 1951 (Showa 26)
Signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty

April 28, 1952 (Showa 27)
Entry into force of the San Francisco Peace Treaty

4 Agreements between Leaders

Since the issue of the Northern Territories first arose, the negotiations between the Governments of Japan and the Soviet Union/Russia have been continuing until today . Here, let's review the history of negotiations from the time of the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration in October 1956.

October 1956

Joint Declaration by Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (The Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration)

Japan and the Soviet Union agree to continue negotiations for the conclusion of a peace treaty and to hand over to Japan the Habomai Islands and the Island of Shikotan after its conclusion.

After the end of World War II, negotiations were held to conclude a peace treaty between Japan and the Soviet Union. However, in regard to the Four Northern Islands, an inherent territory of Japan, no agreement was reached regarding the issue of the attribution of Etorofu Island and Kunashiri Island. Then Japan and the Soviet Union concluded the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration and thereby restored diplomatic relations. In Article 9 of the Declaration, it is clearly stated that the two countries “agreed to continue negotiations for the conclusion of a peace treaty.” The Soviet Union agreed to hand over to Japan the Habomai Islands and the Island of Shikotan. The actual handing over of these islands to Japan was to take place after the conclusion of a peace treaty.



Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama and Premier Nikolai Bulganin sign the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration (Photo: Kyodo News)

Joint Declaration by Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Excerpt)

From 13 to 19 October 1956 negotiations were held at Moscow between the Delegations of Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics .

The following representatives of Japan took part in the negotiations:

Prime Minister, Ichiro Hatoyama,
Ichiro Kono, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, and
Shunichi Matsumoto, Member of the House of Representatives.

The following representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics took part in the negotiations:

N. A. Bulganin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR,
N. S. Khrushchev, Member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR,
A. I. Mikoyan, First Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR,
A. A. Gromyko, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, and
N. T. Fedorenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

In the course of the negotiations, which were held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and co-operation, a full and frank exchange of views concerning relations between Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics took place. Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics fully agreed that the restoration of diplomatic

relations between them would contribute to the development of mutual understanding and co-operation between the two States in the interests of peace and security in the Far East.

As a result of these negotiations between the Delegations of Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, agreement was reached on the following:

1. The state of war between Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall cease on the date on which this Declaration enters into force and peace, friendship and good-neighbourly relations between them shall be restored.

9. Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics agree to continue, after the restoration of normal diplomatic relations between Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, negotiations for the conclusion of a peace treaty. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, desiring to meet the wishes of Japan and taking into consideration the interests of Japan, agrees to hand over to Japan the Habomai Islands and the island of Shikotan. However, the actual handing over of these islands to Japan shall take place after the conclusion of a peace treaty between Japan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

*Provisional translation

April 1991

President Gorbachev's Visit to Japan

It is confirmed in writing that the four islands of the Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri, and Etorofu are the subject of the territorial issue.

President Gorbachev was the first Soviet leader to visit Japan. After a total of six rounds of in-depth negotiations with Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu of Japan, a Japanese-Soviet Joint Communique was signed. This Joint Communique confirmed that negotiations on a peace treaty between the two countries, “including the issue of territorial demarcation, taking into consideration the positions of each side on the attribution of the islands of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri, and Etorofu” had been held, and that “the peace treaty should be the document finally concluding the post-war settlement including the resolution of the territorial issue.” It was made clear for the first time in writing that the four islands of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri, and Etorofu were the subject of the territorial issue that should be solved by a peace treaty.



Prime Minister Kaifu and President Gorbachev, the signatories of the Joint Communique (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

October 1993

President Yeltsin's Visit to Japan

The Tokyo Declaration on Japan-Russia Relations is signed, confirming the continuation of negotiations towards an early conclusion of a peace treaty.

As a result of the summit meeting between Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and President Yeltsin, the “Tokyo Declaration on Japan-Russia Relations” was signed, which declared that both leaders had undertaken serious negotiations on the issue of attribution of the islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and Habomai, and that both sides agreed to continue negotiations towards an early conclusion of a peace treaty through the resolution of this issue based on the historical and legal facts, the documents to which both parties had agreed as well as the principles of law and justice, and to thereby fully normalize the bilateral relations.



Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa signs the “Tokyo Declaration” with President Yeltsin (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

April 1998

The Summit Meeting in Kawana

Prime Minister Hashimoto makes a proposal for the resolution of the territorial issue.

In Kawana in Shizuoka Prefecture during his visit to Japan, President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto held a summit meeting. In this meeting, the relation between Japan and Russia, , having made steady progress since the Krasnoyarsk Summit Meeting held in Russia the previous year expanded even further across all fields. In particular, both leaders agreed that by a peace treaty the issue of attribution of the four islands should be resolved on the basis of paragraph 2 of the Tokyo Declaration, and also such principles as friendship and cooperation between Japan and Russia should be incorporated therein as we move into the 21st century.” Furthermore, Prime Minister Hashimoto made a proposal (Kawana Proposal) for the resolution of the territorial issue.



Prime Minister Hashimoto in the meeting with President Yeltsin (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

November 1998

The Summit Meeting in Moscow

The Moscow Declaration on Establishing a Creative Partnership is signed.

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi made an official visit to Russia for the first time in 25 years as a Prime Minister of Japan. Both leaders signed the “Moscow Declaration on Establishing a Creative Partnership between Japan and the Russian Federation.” The two leaders instructed each government to accelerate negotiations on a peace treaty based on the Tokyo Declaration as well as on the agreements in Krasnoyarsk and Kawana. In regard to the issue of a peace treaty, Russia provided its response to the Kawana Proposal, and the Japanese side decided to take some time to consider.



Prime Minister Obuchi in the meeting with President Yeltsin in Moscow (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

March 2001

The Irkutsk Summit Meeting

Japan and Russia reconfirm that they should conclude a peace treaty through the resolution of the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands.

Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori visited Russia and held a summit meeting with President Vladimir Putin. The two leaders signed the “Irkutsk Statement,” where the results of the utmost efforts made by Japan and Russia to conclude a peace treaty based on the 1997 “Krasnoyarsk Agreement” were reviewed, and a new foundation for future negotiations on a peace treaty was created. This statement confirmed that the 1956 Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration is fundamental legal document that established the starting point of the negotiation process for the conclusion of a peace treaty, and reconfirmed further that the two countries should conclude a peace treaty through the resolution of the issue of attribution of the Four Northern Islands on the basis of the Tokyo Declaration on Japan-Russia Relations in 1993.



Prime Minister Mori and President Vladimir Putin sign the “Irkutsk Statement” (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

January 2003

Prime Minister Koizumi’s Visit to Russia
The “Japan-Russia Action Plan” is adopted, confirming the acceleration of negotiations to resolve the remaining issues and the development of the four-island visits.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President Vladimir Putin adopted the “Japan-Russia Action Plan.” The section on “Peace Treaty Negotiations” states that based on the recognition that the “Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration” in 1956, the “Tokyo Declaration on Japan-Russia Relations” in 1993, the Irkutsk Statement in 2001, and other agreements are the basis for negotiations to accomplish the complete normalization of Japan-Russia relations, both sides will accelerate negotiations to resolve the remaining issues at an early date. It is also stated that both sides will continue efforts to explain to the peoples of both countries, and to develop the four-island visits.



Prime Minister Koizumi and President Putin sign the Joint Statement (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

Outcome Document

“Joint Statement Concerning the Adoption of a Japan-Russia Action Plan”

Aspiring to open up a new horizon for broad Japan-Russia partnership by ultimately overcoming difficult legacies from the past between the two countries, and affirming their determination to conclude a peace treaty as soon as possible through the solution of the issue of where the islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and Habomai belong and therefore accomplish the complete normalization of Japan-Russia relations through vigorous negotiations based on the agreements that have been achieved to date.

*Provisional translation

“Japan-Russia Action Plan”

It is agreed to develop relations between Japan and Russia over a wide range of fields, based around six central pillars that included “Deepening of Political Dialogue,” “Peace Treaty Negotiations” and “Cooperation in the International Fora.”

April 2013

Prime Minister Abe’s Visit to Russia
Both leaders share the recognition that the absence of a peace treaty between Japan and Russia 67 years after the end of World War II is an unnatural state of affairs.

At the meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Abe stated that when depicting the future development of Japan-Russia relations, prospects for concluding a peace treaty were indispensable. Both leaders shared the recognition that the absence of a peace treaty between Japan and Russia 67 years after the end of World War II is an unnatural state of affairs, and expressed their determination to conclude a peace treaty by overcoming the gap between their positions and finally resolving the issue which was determined to be resolved both in the 2003 Joint Statement and Action Plan. Furthermore, Prime Minister Abe emphasized that a decision by himself and President Putin would be crucial in order to resolve this difficult issue. The two leaders agreed to “jointly give instructions to their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs to accelerate, in aspiring to open up a new future-oriented horizon for the Japan-Russia partnership, the negotiations toward elaborating a mutually acceptable solution of the peace treaty issue in order to put it before the two leaders.



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Vladimir Putin shake hands at the summit meeting in Moscow. (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

Outcome Document

“Joint Statement on the Development of Japan-Russia Partnership”

The two leaders shared recognition that the absence of a peace treaty between Japan and Russia 67 years after the end of World War II is an unnatural state of affairs. The two leaders agreed to jointly give instructions to their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs to accelerate the negotiations toward elaborating a mutually acceptable solution of the peace treaty issue in order to put it before the two leaders.

*Provisional translation

December 2016

President Putin’s Visit to Japan
It is agreed to commence discussions on joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands.

At the summit meeting in Yamaguchi held during President Putin’s visit to Japan, the two leaders had candid and extremely in-depth discussions over a long period of time on the issue of a peace treaty, as a result of which, the two leaders expressed their sincere determination to resolve this issue. Based thereon, they agreed to commence discussions for joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands under a special arrangement, and shared the view to improve the procedures for the grave visits, etc. by former island residents.



The summit meeting in Nagato City, Yamaguchi Prefecture (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

Outcome Document

Press Statement (Joint Economic Activities on the Four Northern Islands and Issue of Concluding a Peace Treaty) (Excerpt)

- 1. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan and V. V. Putin, President of the Russian Federation, ... reached mutual understanding that the commencement of the consultations on joint economic activities on Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan, and the Habomai Islands by Japan and Russia can be a significant step toward the conclusion of a peace treaty.
- 4. Japan and Russia stand on the basis that this Statement and any agreement achieved thereon concerning the coordination on the joint economic activities as well as the implementation of the joint economic activities are without prejudice to the positions of Japan and the Russian Federation concerning the issue of a peace treaty.
- 5. The two leaders agreed to proceed with the negotiations on the joint economic activities on the above-mentioned islands and expressed their sincere determination to resolve the issue of a peace treaty.

*Provisional translation

Press Statement (Grave Visits etc. by Former Island Residents) (Excerpt)

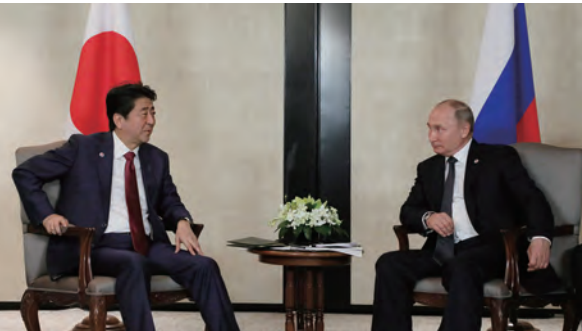
The two leaders expressed their endorsement to create favorable conditions for the people-to-people exchange between the two states. In particular, they touched upon the theme on the visits by former island residents to the graves of their ancestors, which have been implemented based on the agreement dated July 2, 1986 between Japan and the Soviet Union. The two leaders agreed, on the basis of humanitarian considerations, that the scheme of the implementation of the above agreement requires improvement that takes into account, above all, advanced age of the Japanese participants in these visits. In this regard, the two leaders instructed their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs to promptly consider possible measures including the setting up of additional temporary passing points and the further simplification of the current procedures.

*Provisional translation

November 2018

Summit meeting in Singapore
It is agreed to accelerate negotiations on a peace treaty based on the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration of 1956.

Prime Minister Abe and President Putin agreed to “accelerate negotiations on a peace treaty based on the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration of 1956,” on the basis of the trust built by the accumulation of cooperation under the new approach since the summit meeting in December 2016.



Prime Minister Abe, meeting with President Putin (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

June 2019

President Putin’s visit to Japan
The two leaders welcome that the negotiations on a peace treaty have been conducted energetically under their determination expressed jointly in Singapore, and share the view to continue to advance the negotiations.

Prime Minister Abe and President Putin held a summit meeting on the occasion of the G20 Osaka Summit. The two leaders held candid discussions, including on the progress and prospects of the negotiations frequently conducted following the summit meeting in Singapore in November 2018 between the foreign ministers, who are responsible for the negotiations, and between the deputy foreign ministers, who are handling the negotiations.



Prime Minister Abe, meeting with President Putin (photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

Outcome Document

Press Statement concerning the Japan-Russia Summit Meeting on June 29, 2019

Prime Minister Abe and President Putin ... welcomed that the negotiations on a peace treaty were conducted energetically, under their determination to accelerate negotiations on a peace treaty based on the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration of 1956, as expressed jointly in Singapore in November 2018, and shared the view that they would continue to advance the negotiations. The two leaders confirmed their sincere determination to resolve the peace treaty issue, which was expressed in Nagato in December 2016, and welcomed the development toward the implementation of the joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands.

*Provisional translation

5 Japan-Russia Exchange Program and Cooperation

Development of Japan-Russia cooperation concerning the Four Northern Islands

The Government conducts cooperation and exchanges in the Four Northern Islands as shown below that contributes to create a favorable environment for progress in the negotiations on a peace treaty including the resolution of the Northern Territories Issue.

1 Four-Island Exchange Program, Free Visits and Visits to Graves

(1) Four- Island Exchange Program

Under this program, until the resolution of the Northern Territories Issue, Japanese citizens and Russian residents in the Four Northern Islands are able to engage in mutual visits without passports or visas. The aim of this program is to promote mutual understanding between them and contribute to the settlement of the territorial issue.

(2) Free Visits

From a humanitarian perspective, arrangements for visits to the Northern Territories by Japanese citizens who are former residents of the Islands and their families are made as simple as possible.

(3) Visits to Gravest

From a humanitarian perspective, Japanese citizens visit their family graves on the Islands only with an identification card.



Four-Island Exchange Program: Making accessories (in Kunashiri Island)
Photo: Northern Territories Issue Association

2 Assistance for residents of the Four Northern Islands

- (1) Accepting patients from the Four Northern Islands
- (2) Training for doctors, nurses and others from the Northern Territories

3 Cooperation in the neighboring areas between Japan and Russia, including the Northern Territories

- (1) Cooperation in disaster prevention
- (2) Cooperation in ecosystem conservation

6 Facilities related to the Northern Territories

There are a number of facilities in the areas neighboring the Northern Territories (Nemuro City, Bekkai Town, Nakashibetsu Town, Shibetsu Town and Rausu Town) where visitors can catch sight of the Northern Territories, and learn the history, nature, and geography of the Northern Territories, the campaign for the return of the Northern Territories, as well as Russian culture.



Name/Address

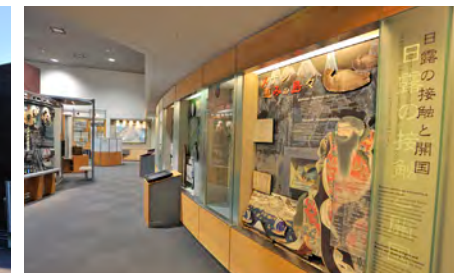
- ① **Nostalgia House/The Hoppokan Museum**
36-6 Nosappu, Nemuro City
- ② **Ni Ho Ro (Northern Territories Exchange Center)**
110-9 Honioi, Nemuro City
- ③ **Northern Territories Museum**
33-2 Nosappu-Misaki, Nemuro City
- ④ **Betsukai Northern Observation Tower**
5-27 Odaitou, Bekkai Town
- ⑤ **Northern Territories Museum**
1-14 Kita 2 jo Higashi 1 chome, Shibetsu Town
- ⑥ **Rausu Kunashiri Observation Tower**
32-1 Rebun-cho, Rausu Town
- ⑦ **Shima no Kakehashi (Bridge to the Four Islands)**
36-6 Nosappu, Nemuro City

Main local Facilities for public awareness

① Nostalgia House The Hoppokan Museum



② Ni Ho Ro (Northern Territories Exchange Center)



③ Northern Territories Museum



④ Betsukai Northern Observation Tower



⑤ Northern Territories Museum



⑥ Rausu Kunashiri Observation Tower



⑦ Shima no Kakehashi (Bridge to the Four Islands)

