

## Modern Russo-Japanese Relations: is there a Chance to Break Strategic Impasse?

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Relations between Russia and Japan throughout the entire period of their existence are many-sided, changeable and subjective to a political environment as on the international arena, and on domestic level. At the turn of the 19-20th centuries they had been connected with confrontation of two powers on the Far East theater of world politics, peaceful time between two world wars had been filled with high conflict potential between the USSR and militaristic Japan. In post-war time, the relations between two countries had been connected with division of the world on socialist and capitalist blocs that put the states in a difficult situation of belonging to two contradictory systems rigidly outlined and limited extent of cooperation. Therefore, despite the signing of the Moscow Declaration between the countries in 1956, which was summing up the result of the Soviet-Japanese war and stating the termination of military operations between the countries, the peace treaty has not been signed. Though in general, both states were ready to sign it on the terms of transfer of two disputed islands to Japan, the variety of reasons prevented it. First, the unwillingness of the United States, the ally of Japan, to allow it to improve the relations with its largest rival, and also anxiety of the USSR concerning excessive rapprochement of two countries and creation of threat at the east boundaries. With respect thereto, any chance of adjustment of political connections between two countries were postponed almost for thirty years - after signing of the Japanese-American security treaty of 1960 and the followed refusal of the Soviet Union of discussion of territorial dispute.

After the end of the Cold war and collapse of the USSR in the relations between "new" Russia and Japan there was a possibility of strategic break, in particular Russia recognized the territorial problem that gave hopes to the Japanese officials. However, so-called "windows of opportunities" for the Russian-Japanese relations had ended with nothing - positively begun relations of the president Yeltsin and the Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto had not yielded any result, and Putin and Koizumi's arrangements on "parallelism" of development of the economic relations and discussion of the peace treaty ended with refusal of Japanese side to follow the Declaration of 1956. Thus, in the 21st century two states have appeared in a situation when dynamic development of the relations in lack of the peace treaty is considerably slowed down by the remnant of the Second World War.

Firstly, it is connected with an unresolved question of the "Northern territories", absence of the peace treaty that does not get out Russia and Japan to break peculiar foreign policy "impasse". Secondly, the unresolved territorial problem around the Kuril Islands is still "stumbling block" in relationship of two countries. Thirdly, absence of the peace treaty between Russia and Japan does not allow to develop fully interstate cooperation in many spheres, in particular the energy. Moreover, strengthening of China on the one hand and reforms of the Japanese Constitution as a basis of "normality" of the state from the other hand, and unstable relationship with neighbors and charges of revanchism from another became realities of the last years for the Japanese foreign policy.

Since returning of Shinzo Abe to power in Japan, Moscow began to receive clear signals about the desire of the Japanese side to adjust relations with Russia for solving the territorial problem in general to settle the abnormal situation[4] of the absence of the peace treaty between two countries. The current obvious question both for Russia and for Japan, will they succeed in conclusion of peace treaty? Japanese still link development of the relations with Russia to transfer of disputed islands to it, Russia insists on priority of economic development before the decision the territorial problem. At the moment both countries are in fairly new international conditions. Japan, which has faced with growing China, wants to play more significant role in world affairs, having thus normal relations with neighbors. Russia, which has faced the western sanctions, needs economic interaction and investments first of all.

In this work we consider the objective reasons demanding from Japan and Russia establishing communications, various points of view in the countries which influence adoption of foreign policy decisions. We also examines internal and external constraints that do not allow to develop bilateral relations more dynamic. Many scholars have examined Russo-Japanese relations, but most researchers focused on the problem of peace treaty and problem of northern territories. This study focuses on Japan-Russian relations in positive way to establish new century for both countries in the context of mutual profitable cooperation. Therefore, the main hypothesis examined in this thesis is that strategic breakthrough is possible today because of the mutual interest of the two countries.

This paper seeks to determine possibility for Japan and Russia to exit from strategic "deadlock" and analyze prerequisites of radical transformation relationship between two countries.

The principal objective of this research is to investigate the current condition of Russo-Japanese relations and assess the prospects for their development, including the possibility of a positive breakthrough beyond the long-standing stalemate.

A further subsidiary aim is to determine main spheres and prospects of Russo-Japanese relations.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- to make the analysis of the main developments in the relations of Russia and Japan during the second Abe administration (from 2012 to 2016); how were they influenced by crisis in Ukraine;
- to conduct the analysis of those factors in Russia which influence at the development of the relations with Japan, limits which exist and to consider potential spheres of cooperation;
- to consider the impact of various factors in Japan on relations with Russia and views on these relations of different political groups;
- to analyze the American factor as key for the Japanese foreign policy;
- to analyze foreign policy steps of Shinzo Abe in the context of the started anti-Russian sanctions;
- to make the analysis of opportunities for extension of interaction between two countries, in particular energy and investment;
- to give the forecast and possible scenarios for development of Russian-Japanese relationship.

The main concept of our work is connected with the scientific provision on interrelation of foreign policy with internal, with the ideology professed by the state and national traditions, characteristic for it. We also rely on work of Richard Samuels holding the opinion that Japan having geopolitical experience of the great power, having the neighbor strengthening China finally will leave from under "guardianship" of the USA. D. V. Streletsov's work "Political system of modern Japan" also allows to understand what political groups in Japan strive for dialogue with Russia and what are those limitations which still have not let to sign the peace treaty between the countries. Moreover, research of E.V. Molodyakova "The foreign policy of

Japan" allows to understand how process of adoption of foreign policy decisions in Japan is based; on what these or those decisions are made, and is considered the American factor as one of considerable in the foreign policy of "land of the rising sun".

Finally, the conclusions, drawn by T.J. Pempel in the book "Japan in Crisis" regarding the theory of a regionalism and vital need of an exit for Japanese state from crisis by creation of subregional structures in Northeast Asia, part of which Russia should be, became a considerable basis of the thesis. It will become unconditional one more important element of theoretical base the foreign policy concept of Russia in the context of which multipolarity and ever-increasing value has the Pacific Rim that is caused by affiliation of Russia to this dynamically developing region. Improvement of relationship with Japan especially in the context of growing China and possible threat of dependence of the Russian Federation on the new world economic leader will be one of priorities.

In order to defend this thesis this research is based on the following methods:

- Analysis of documents
- Event analysis
- Content analysis
- Case-studies
- Descriptive analysis

This paper is divided into three chapters. The first Chapter describes the main developments in relations of Russia and Japan for the period of 2012-2016, as well as the analysis of the results of the summits and the degree of intensification of negotiations between leaders of the two countries depending on the international situation. In the second Chapter the analysis of the Russian approaches to the relations with Japan is conducted, various aspects influencing the bilateral relations, in particular economic and investment interest of Russia, and also Chinese factor to the context of the "Russian pivot to the East" are considered. The third Chapter describes the main approaches in Japan to the relations with Russia, the analysis of the internal factors and political groups limiting development of communications, special attention is paid to Japanese-American alliance as the most powerful factor of the Japanese foreign policy. In conclusion, we consider the main scenarios of development of relations between the two countries, focuses on the possibility of resolving the territorial dispute on a variety of conditions and in a changing international environment.

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