

ABOUT US

Offices Kinshicho and
Sagamihara
Telephone: 03 5637 8809
Web
www.tomtom-english.com
Email
kinshicho@
tomtom-english.com



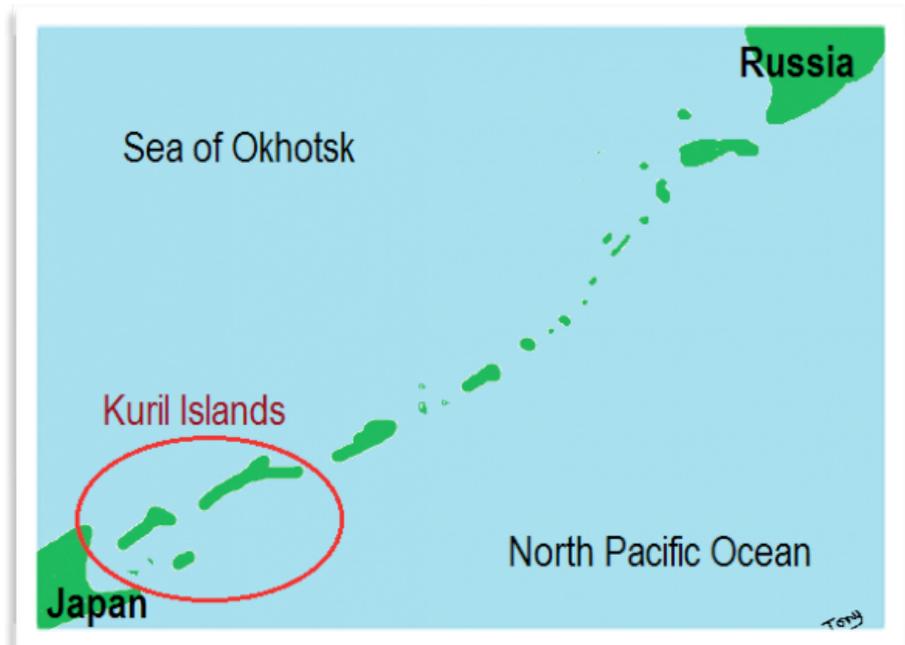
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TOM TOM ENGLISH



VOCABULARY

Woe =

Great sorrow or
distress

Legacy =

Something that can be
passed on to future
generations

Irk =

To irritate or annoy,
exasperate

Feud =

A bitter disagreement
lasting for a long time

Belie =

Contradict, show to be
false, a contrast

Read the article overleaf and discuss these questions:

1. Do you think Mr. Abe will be able to reach an agreement with Russia? Why? Why not?
2. Do you think Japan should make a compromise agreement with Russia? If so, what compromise? If not, why not?
3. Do you think it would be better to ignore this issue and wait for another generation? Why? Why not?
4. What do you think the reaction of the Japanese public would be to a compromise agreement? Would it be positive or negative?
5. Japan has territorial disputes with several other countries. What are the similarities and differences in each case?

VOCABULARY

Make Headway =

To achieve progress,
move towards a goal

Advocate =

To put forward a plan or
idea

Stance =

Position on a certain
issue

Backlash =

Strong negative reaction
by a large number of
people

Clout =

Influence or power,
especially in business or
politics

Japanese PM Shinzo Abe hopes close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russia's economic **woes** and concerns about China's rise will help him make progress in an old territorial row. Abe, who wants to leave a diplomatic **legacy**, may even alter a long-standing demand that the sovereignty of all four disputed islands northeast of Hokkaido be resolved before a peace treaty ending World War Two is signed.

Abe's courtship of Putin risks **irking** the US, which is **feuding** with Moscow over Syria and Crimea. "I will resolve the territorial issue, end the situation in which no peace treaty has been concluded even 71 years after the war and cultivate the possibility of Japan-Russia cooperation in areas such as the economy and energy," Abe said.

Those bold pledges **belie** a tangled disagreement over who owns the islands. Strong public opposition in Russia to compromise could limit Putin's room for maneuver. But Abe, who has met Putin 14 times, has a chance to **make headway** when they meet in Peru in November and in Yamaguchi in December.

According to a senior Japanese government official "Mr Abe is trying to break the ice in the frozen situation on the peace treaty issue." He added that Japan did not expect an "overall resolution". The territorial feud stems from the Soviet Union's decision in the final days of World War Two to seize the four islands. Japan has insisted that its sovereignty of all four islands be confirmed before a peace treaty is signed, but Tokyo may be rethinking that stance. "It might be possible to get things moving by going ahead with two islands first," Masashi Adachi, director of the LDP's foreign affairs division told Reuters. "There would be a lot of opposition to giving in completely on the

other two, but I think we could get public understanding," he said.

Muneo Suzuki, long involved in Russian affairs and now advising Abe, has **advocated** a similar proposal in the past.

"When we consider how to resolve the problem of the four islands, we cannot stop at the entrance. We have to look to the exit and make realistic suggestions," he told a news conference. Last week, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga denied Japan had altered its basic **stance**. And for Moscow, agreeing to a peace treaty without settling ownership of the bigger islands could spark a domestic **backlash**.

"The Japanese side is relying on Putin's personal will," said Dmitry Streltsov of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. "It seems they are overestimating the room for maneuver that Putin has." Still, some experts said this time might prove different from past failures. One reason for guarded optimism is that Abe will likely be prime minister for at least two more years. "In my opinion, there is a possibility to resolve the problem of a peace treaty while Putin and Abe are both in power. After that it's unlikely," said diplomat Alexander Panov.

China's rising **clout** is a major factor encouraging Japan to court Russia. Sino-Japanese ties have improved but Tokyo is worried by Beijing's growing military assertiveness. Abe also hopes proposed joint economic projects will win Russian concessions. Skeptics, though, doubt a breakthrough is likely in December.

"Russian public opinion is strongly against transfer of any territory. Japan is already providing economic cooperation. Why would Russia agree to this? It makes more sense to string it out" said Professor James Brown of Temple University.