

No Kurils Trade Zone

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The  **Moscow Times**

The Japanese government has refused a proposal by President Dmitry Medvedev to create a joint free trade zone on the Kuril Islands, reaffirming its claims to the disputed territories, Prime-Tass reported Monday.

Medvedev voiced the idea during a televised interview Friday, but Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Takeaki Matsumoto said at a briefing in Tokyo that his country considers the island chain, controlled by Russia since World War II, part of its territory and will not accept any proposal that goes against the claim.☒

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