

Russia's Putin and Japan's Abe Meet in Milan, Agree to Maintain Dialogue

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MILAN — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose countries are locked in a long-standing dispute over Russian-held islands off Hokkaido, met Friday and agreed to maintain dialogue, Japanese officials said.

"The two leaders ... confirmed their will to continue dialogue and to discuss bilateral and global issues at the APEC meeting," a Japanese Foreign Ministry media official said.

In a 10-minute meeting on the sidelines of the EU-Asia (ASEM) summit in Milan, the two leaders also exchanged views on the Ukrainian crisis.

Abe urged Putin to play a positive role for the peace process to make progress, said Kenko Sone, the Japanese deputy chief cabinet secretary for public affairs.

Putin said the peace process was moving forward but added there were some differences in the positions of Russia and Ukraine, Sone said.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit will take place in Beijing in November.

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