

Putin Says Compromise With Japan Over Disputed Kuril Islands Is 'Possible'

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Russian President Vladimir Putin has suggested a compromise with Japan over the disputed Kuril islands in which neither side would feel like the “winner or the loser.”

The Soviet Union never signed a permanent peace treaty with Japan after the Second World War because of a disagreement over the four islands, currently controlled by Russia, which were seized by Soviet forces at the end of the war.

In an [interview](#) published this week with the Bloomberg news agency, Putin said a compromise with Japan would be possible as long as there was a “high level of trust” between the two sides, warning that a settlement was “no closer” now than it was in 1956, when Japan and the Soviet Union reestablished diplomatic relations after the war.

Putin emphasized however that Russia “very much wants to find a solution to this problem with our Japanese friends,” adding that “Russia does not trade in territories.”

“We’re not talking about exchanges or purchases, but a decision whereby neither side feels they are victorious or defeated,” he said.

Putin’s comments on the disputed territories came ahead of a meeting with his Japanese counterpart, Shinzo Abe, as part of the the Far East Economic Forum, which is currently taking place in Vladivostok. Putin pledged to discuss the islands, which Russia calls the South Kurils and Japan calls the Northern territories, during the meeting, along with trade and economic development.

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