

Summarizing Comments



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Today we had fruitful discussions rich in content, and with being able to hear a variety of information and opinions, I think it was a great success.

What made a lasting impression from the discussions in the morning was that today there certainly continues to be dynamic movement between Japan and Russia. In the light of the Sochi and Vladivostok summit meetings and the future summit meeting to be held in Yamaguchi Prefecture, new developments are emerging in Japan–Russia relations, and this “dialogue” was held amid such great promise. Needless to say, energy is one plan for cooperation, among eight, but there were major discussions which are probably the essential core of the cooperation plans. There were two sessions based on those discussions.

Discussions were primarily held on fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal in Session A, and on the environment and non-fossil energy such as renewables and energy conservation in Session B. Various expectations and various challenges were raised from the standpoints of both Japan and Russia. Whatever the sector of the speaker, considering the problems for Japan and Russia and for the wider Asia, I sensed that from here on in there was potential for sufficient cooperation and a future thereof. At the same time, I think that what we must do in order to realize those great expectations was presented using the platform of this dialogue.

How to realize the great expectations and the matters to be done will become important issues. As to what I feel necessary for that realization, one thing is the importance of policy initiatives and policy support. Energy issues are directly connected to energy security and environmental issues. Such issues have a bearing on so-called externalities, and bilateral cooperation certainly also lies in international relations and the world of international politics. As for its significance, the firm support of both the Japanese and Russian governments will certainly be key in continuing to realize diverse cooperation.

At the same time, the actual players realizing this cooperation will be we ordinary people, either private-

sector players or consumers. In order to make this a reality, I think that what will be important next is how to secure economic rationality. In today’s dialogue market liberalization and competition were pointed out repeatedly. In such a market environment, I feel that in continuing to pursue rationality firmly, in other words how to heighten economic rationality within policy support, will become extremely important here on in.

In continuing to advance this cooperation it is decidedly important to further deepen and heighten mutual understanding between Japan and Russia. I think that mutually understanding what the Russian side wants and what matters for the Japanese side is important. In the question and answer portion of Session A, regarding for instance the issues for gas, there was the question of and answer to what exactly Japan wants Russia to do. “Mutual understanding” which considers what the other side holds necessary and how to respond will become an important key term.

From the perspective of this mutual understanding, the role played by the platform of the Japan–Russia Energy and Environment Dialogue, which has been held on nine occasions, is decidedly important. After nine dialogues I think there have sometimes been expectations and surges for Japan–Russia cooperation. Therein I think its continuation is a great contribution to that. The “Energy and Environment Dialogue” continues on Niigata soil, and plays an important role in promoting mutual understanding and energy cooperation between the two countries of Japan and Russia, and I hope for it to play that role hereafter.

I don’t know that immediately after this dialogue there will be great benefit in energy and the environment for Niigata. I hope there will be great benefit, but more than that, I think that as a result exchange and cooperation between Japan and Russia will be promoted as a whole, and that is not only for energy, but will also become an important step and spark for great exchange including economically and for people.

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