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April 14, 2017

The Honorable Sergey Aksyonov
Head of the Republic of Crimea
Co-Chair of the Organizing Committee of the
Yalta International Economic Forum

Dear Mr. Aksyonov:

My warmest greetings, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations upon your plans to host the upcoming the Third Yalta International Economic Forum in the Republic of Crimea. I anticipate immense success for that gathering, and also feel deeply honored to have received an invitation to participate in this eminent event with my colleague Mr. Mitsuhiro Kimura.

To my extreme regret, however, a previously scheduled engagement will prevent me from taking part in the Forum. I apologize profusely for this unfortunate state of affairs, while conveying my intention to visit your nation in the near future.

Taking this opportunity, I want to express my utmost respect for the steps taken by the Republic of Crimea in coming to grips with the numerous challenges in its path. This is most certainly the direct fruit of your own wise leadership, backed by the stellar right of self-government exercised by the citizens of Crimea and the tireless endeavors to power your nation to greater growth and prosperity.

Allow me to add my own personal observation that Crimea has continued to record such triumphs despite the stubborn continuation of irrational economic sanctions by the United States and other Western nations. These sanctions clearly ignore and distort the facts and the realities of history, not to mention standing in defiance of accepted democratic principles.



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While Crimea's push to build up its national infrastructure is still a work in progress, you have taken enormous strides in that direction. Your nation's ports, for example, have earned particularly keen interest and attention as superb international distribution bases, while the strategy of a special economic zone is also a policy possessing tremendous appeal.

In my estimate, the Crimea has emerged as an optimum location for taking full advantage of applied technologies for which not only the nations participating this Forum, but also Japan have nurtured considerable know-how and experience. In that sense, I could not be more confident that contributing to the future of Crimea is the right and proper path to cultivating even stronger Russia-Japanese bonds, and supporting the ongoing quest for world peace.

Sadly, in its recent diplomatic relations with the United States, Japan has blindly deferred to the economic sanctions against Crimea. During Russian President Putin's visit to Japan last December, the stage appeared set to make major headway in the ties between Russia and Japan. Consequently, it was particularly disappointing that no mention was even made of this critical issue during the talks.

Taking these issues into consideration, it is my most genuine hope that the Third Yalta International Economic Forum will serve as a solid platform for communicating the far-reaching appeal of Crimea to the world at large. I also sincerely pray that all obstacles impeding the redoubled advancement of your nation will be removed in the near future.

Once again, I apologize for my inability to join in what promises to be an especially productive Forum. When I am able to travel to Crimea, I look forward to confirming with my own eyes the growth and affluence that your nation has obtained under your enlightened guidance.



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In closing, please accept my warmest regards and hopes and wishes for the resounding success of the Economic Forum, along your own fine health, happiness and enduring achievements.

Respectfully yours,

Yukio Hatoyama

President, East Asian Community Institute
Former Prime Minister of Japan