

From: " [REDACTED] " < [REDACTED] >

To: Jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>

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VLADIVOSTOK, RUSSIA –

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Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga agreed Wednesday to cooperate in dealing with North Korea's rising nuclear and missiles threat as well as economic matters.

The meeting, held on the sidelines of an economic forum in the Russian Far East port city of Vladivostok, is the leaders' first since Battulga was elected president in July. Mongolia has diplomatic ties with North Korea, while Japan does not.

Abe told Battulga that North Korea's nuclear test Sunday, which followed the launch last week of a ballistic missile that flew over northern Japan, poses an "unprecedentedly grave and imminent threat" and is "totally unacceptable," according to the Foreign Ministry.

Prime Minister Abe underlined the need to strengthen pressure on North Korea, the ministry said.

The leaders confirmed the importance of strictly and fully implementing U.N. Security Council resolutions, it said. The resolutions impose sanctions on North Korea and ban it from conducting nuclear tests and testing ballistic missiles.

They also agreed to seek early resolution of the issue of past abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korean agents. Tokyo expects Ulan Bator's help in resolving the issue with the country having served as a venue for Japan-North Korea talks over the long-stalled agenda.

"I attach importance to Mongolia as a crucial partner in the region. I hope to promote our bilateral relationship," Abe said at the start of the meeting, which was open to the media. Battulga said, "I want to contribute to the development of East Asia and the Far East."

Resource-dependent Mongolia aims to cooperate with Japan on rebuilding and diversifying its economy with a focus on agriculture, manufacturing and pollution control, based on a new medium-term action plan formulated in March.

Mongolia needs to implement fiscal reforms under an International Monetary Fund rescue program after its economy was hit by falls in commodity prices and a slowdown in the Chinese economy, according to the ministry.

Battulga thanked Abe for Japan's support in developing the Mongolian economy under the IMF rescue program, the ministry said.

The Mongolian leader also told Abe that he has picked Dolgorsuren Dagvadorj, the former sumo grand champion Asashoryu, as his special envoy to promote cooperative ties with Japan.

Abe is on a two-day trip to Vladivostok, during which he will also meet Russian President Vladimir Putin and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

