

Obama Threatens Russia with New Sanctions, Backs Japan in Island Dispute



Tokyo, April 24 (RHC)-- Speaking on Thursday during a visit to Japan, U.S. President Barack Obama said Russia has violated the spirit of last week's truce deal and warned it faces new U.S. sanctions.

Obama also offered public support for Japan in its dispute with China over a group of islands in the East China Sea. Obama said the islands are covered by a defense pact between the U.S. and Japan.

Japan is the first stop in Obama's four-country Asia tour. He is expected to discuss the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a secretive deal among Pacific Rim countries to establish a free-trade zone encompassing nearly 40 percent of the global economy.

Critics say the TPP would further entrench the failures of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, which went into effect 20 years ago and caused mass displacement in Mexico. Protests against the TPP intensified ahead of Obama's visit, with several marches in the streets of Tokyo.

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