

Cold War Endpoints?: Beginning the Debate

by David Wolff

Chronology and periodization are the bread and butter of the historical profession, so it is no surprise to see the proper dating of the beginning and the end of the Cold War under discussion. 1945 is often favored, for how could a cold war be an age's dominant feature, while a hot war was still going on? Churchill's Fulton speech is also mentioned as an important turning point, but so is the Marshall Plan, the Cominform, the Truman Doctrine, the Soviet bomb, NSC-68, the Lublin Poles and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Clearly this discussion will go on for a long time.¹

Similar disagreements are also evident regarding the end of the Cold War. As we approach 1999 and the activities planned to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Berlin Wall and Iron Curtain collapse, we will certainly hear more on this topic. Although 1989, like 1945 at the beginning, has many commonsensical advantages to recommend it, different causal emphases in analyzing the end of the Cold War will produce different chronologies. If Gorbachev's appointment as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the beginning of the end, then 1985 looms large. If the Reagan build-up and Star Wars drove the Soviets to bankruptcy and despair, then the early 1980s grow in importance. Specialists who give primacy in their analytical priorities to either the fall of Leninism or the rise of nationalism are likely to pick the 1991 demise of the Soviet Union.

This section of *CWIHP Bulletin 10* begins with a remarkable essay by the director of the National Security Archive, Thomas S. Blanton, with accompanying Russian documents. It seems that on Christmas Eve 1989, with state authority crumbling in Romania and the Ceausescus only a day away from the firing squad, the United States proposed that the Russians send a peacekeeping mission to the area. The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister I. Aboimov, in refusing the offer, made a "Christmas gift" of the Brezhnev doctrine to the American ambassador Jack F. Matlock, Jr. This seems to have been the first direct American request for increased Soviet military activity in Eastern Europe since 1945. As such, it represented a sea change in comparison with the fears and concerns of the Cold War era. Of course, what was a key moment of mutual self-recognition for the superpowers was relatively insignificant in Romania's end of Cold War, since no Soviet troops were actually sent.

As this final comment makes clear, the Cold War ended differently in different places, since the historical chronologies of countries and regions overlap and diverge. In the second part of this section, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa introduces new archival evidence on Soviet-Japanese

relations in the late Cold War period that suggest that in Asia the endpoint may not yet have been reached. This implies that this relatively neglected field has much to offer as we refine analytical tools for the study of the Cold War. Unfortunately, until recently, little documentation was available. The working group transcripts are a remarkable study in Soviet-Japanese stalemate, one of the great "givens" of late twentieth-century history. Change is more exciting to study, but enduring continuities are no less important. The tit for tat back and forth of the diplomatic dialogue demonstrates one of the more arcane uses of history, too. Of course, the American role in the ties between the US's most important economic "partner," Japan, and its most important security "concern," Russia, has also been understudied, although a National Security Archive initiative on US-Japanese security relations run by Robert Wampler has recently begun to remedy that situation.

Both the Romanian and Soviet-Japanese revelations fall among that group of cases where the availability of East-bloc evidence has outpaced the more systematic and expansive declassification process in the West. Up until 1968-69, the opening of Western holdings has followed the thirty-year rule, for most classes of documents, to outnumber the East-bloc counterparts. Starting from 1969, the reverse is, by and large, true with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) offering sole recourse.² If Blanton's FOIA fails, the Matlock instructions and conversation will only emerge from the American vault in the year 2014. The fact that Blanton was able to corroborate the Russian documents with Matlock's recollections points out one of the distinguishing characteristics of Cold War studies and contemporary history, in general — the importance of oral history. When combined with and tempered by documents, these two genres of testimony are most revealing.³

Keeping this in mind, perhaps there ought to be a mechanism to accelerate release of documents deemed crucial to the learning of historical lessons from the recent past, at least for already non-existent East European regimes whose archives are open, and before the surviving participants leave us for good. These are, after all, the lessons with deepest and most immediate bearing on the present.

If the Cold War ended at different times in different places, then it is entirely possible that it is not quite over yet in some places. This is a statement of great practical import for the Cold War International History Project and all scholars associated in the endeavor of excavating the Cold War. Wherever the documents are least accessible, some strain of ongoing Cold War mentality is probably

still present. In this sense, the archival openness work of CWIHP, through relations with scholarly and archival authorities in many countries, indirectly measures the Cold War's lasting legacy. Success in obtaining documentation on a given topic is the ultimate proof that that moment of Cold War can finally be made into history, one more thread in the new international history of the twentieth century.

¹ One of the few things that all of these events have in common is that Stalin's thoughts on them were decisive in shaping Soviet policies viewed simultaneously as international actions and reactions. In order to broaden and deepen this discussion of Cold War origins, CWIHP has begun a project on "I.V. Stalin as a Cold War Statesman." Transcripts and memcons of Stalin's meetings with foreign leaders are being collected for future publication and research in

connection with a major CWIHP-sponsored international conference, scheduled for late 1998. The Yugoslavia section of this *Bulletin* has a first installment from the Stalin project. Additional conversations with Stalin will go up on the CWIHP website (cwihp.si.edu) in the course of 1998.

² Russian archives are an exception on the East-bloc side with post-1969 documents emerging only in special cases. On the American side, extensive declassifications have taken place on certain post-1969 topics due to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) suits that generated the National Security Archive's foreign policy series. These include: Afghanistan, 1973-80; El Salvador, 1977-84; Iran, 1977-80; Iran-Contra Affair, 1983-88; Nicaragua, 1978-1990; Phillipines, 1965-86; South Africa, 1962-89; US Nuclear Non-Proliferation, 1945-91.

but the actual shifts in power within the Warsaw Pact. These included the beginning of the “roundtable” discussions in Poland in January-February 1989, which ultimately produced free elections in the summer (swept by Solidarity), and the March 1989 multicandidate elections in the Soviet Union, which put reformers and dissidents, including Andrei Sakharov, into the Congress of People’s Deputies. By May 1989, these extraordinary developments led former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski to tell the *Washington Post*’s Don Oberdorfer: “We are quite literally in the early phases of what might be called the postcommunist era.”⁹

The most public finale of the Cold War, of course, came with the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. In the words of then-deputy national security adviser and future CIA director Robert Gates: “No one who watched on television will ever forget the images of crowds of East and West Germans dancing on top of the Wall, hacking away bits of it for souvenirs, and finally dismantling whole sections with construction machinery. If there ever was a symbolic moment when most of the world thought the Cold War ended, it was that night in Berlin.”¹⁰

One of Gates’ staff at the time, Robert Hutchings of the NSC, puts the date of his “epiphany” a little earlier. “Most of us dealing with these issues in the United States or in Europe had our epiphanies, our moments of realization that the end of Europe’s division might actually be at hand—not just as an aspiration for the 1990s but as an imminent reality,” Mr. Hutchings writes. “For many it came with the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9; others may have had premonitions already in early 1989 (although surely not as many as later claimed such prescience). Mine came with the election of Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the early steps taken by his government. The United States was working hard to persuade the Soviet Union that self-determination in Eastern Europe could be achieved in a manner consistent with legitimate Soviet security interests; now, in Poland, the Mazowiecki government was living proof of that contention, offering an early glimmer of what post-Cold War Europe might look like. (To be sure, even the most optimistic scenario for this transition was still being measured in years, not months.)”¹¹

But all of these memorable moments represented initiatives by Gorbachev or by the East Europeans themselves forcing change. Where was the evidence of “new thinking” by the United States?

For the Russian historian Vladislav Zubok, that evidence appeared at Malta, at the Bush-Gorbachev summit in early December 1989. President Bush’s

remains to be seen.

The key document for this discussion is the final one in the series published by the Foreign Ministry, a 25 December memorandum of conversation written by Deputy Foreign Minister Aboimov of his meeting the day before with Matlock. Since 24 December was a Sunday, presumably Foreign Minister Shevardnadze as well as Secretary General Gorbachev were not to be found at the office, but in their dachas.

Interestingly, Ambassador Matlock's 1995 book on the fall of the Soviet Union does not mention the discussion detailed here in the Soviet notes of the conversation. Only a very indirect hint emerges from the Matlock passage that reads as follows: "After Germany, the most traumatic event in the onetime Soviet bloc for the Communist Party and the KGB was the bloody revolution that took place in Romania at the end of the year. The violence directed at Ceausescu and his family, and members of the hated Securitate secret police, was covered in great detail by the Soviet press, and television did not spare its viewers the scenes of violence. But when the anti-Ceausescu forces invited Soviet intervention to support them, Moscow refused, signaling that the days of military intervention in Eastern Europe—even under conditions the West might have found tolerable—were over."²⁰

Compare the language Matlock uses here—"even under conditions the West might have found tolerable"—with the language his Soviet counterpart uses to describe the U.S. approach: "Then Matlock touched on the issue that, apparently, he wanted to raise from the very beginning of the conversation. The Administration, he said, is very interested in knowing if the possibility of military assistance by the Soviet Union to the Romanian National Salvation Front is totally out of question. Matlock suggested (*probrosil*) the following option: what would the Soviet Union do if an appropriate appeal came from the Front? Simultaneously, the Ambassador hinted at the idea, apparently on instructions from Washington. He let us know that under the present circumstances the military

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- ⁴ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The CIA's Credibility," *The National Interest* (Winter 1995/96), p. 111. For the full text of Gorbachev's speech, see FBIS-SOV-99-236, 8 December 1988, pp. 11-19.
- ⁵ Quoted in Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn*, p. 319.
- ⁶ R. Craig Nation, *Black Earth, Red Star: A History of Soviet Security Policy, 1917-1991* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 308.
- ⁷ R. Craig Nation, *Black Earth, Red Star*, p. 308: "A more straightforward repudiation of the Brezhnev Doctrine could scarcely be imagined...."
- ⁸ Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (Boston: Little Brown, 1994), p. 134.
- ⁹ Quoted in Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn*, p. 346.
- ¹⁰ Robert M. Gates, *From The Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 468.
- ¹¹ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, p. 74.
- ¹² Personal communication, March 14, 1997; see also Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 135.
- ¹³ Quoted in Raymond Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994), p. 408.
- ¹⁴ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 165.
- ¹⁵ Don Oberdorfer, "Baker Implies U.S. Would Back East-Bloc Military Aid to Rebels; French, Dutch Would Support Soviet Role in Romania," *The Washington Post*, 25 December 1989, pp. A37, A40.
- ¹⁶ Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 408.
- ¹⁷ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, p. 86. Ambassador Jack F. Matlock, Jr. does not agree that Mr. Baker's comment was "unfortunate"; rather, "under the circumstances we would not have minded some limited Soviet assistance to the NSF [National Salvation Front] and it did not hurt to let the Soviets know." Matlock letter to the author, 21 May 1997.
- ¹⁸ Statement by the press secretary, White House, 25 December 1989, cited in Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, p. 381.
- ¹⁹ The Russian versions, in transcript rather than facsimile, are to be found in *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, No. 21/22, November 1994, pp. 74-80. The present writer has filed Freedom of Information Act requests with the State Department for Secretary Baker's instructions and Ambassador Matlock's response, neither of which has yet been declassified. Ambassador Matlock notes that the memcon accords with his own memory of the conversation. Matlock letter to the author, 21 May 1997.
- ²⁰ Jack F. Matlock, Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 261-262.
- ²¹ Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, pp. 170-171.
- ²² Matlock letter to the author, 21 May 1997; Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 171.
- ²³ Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 262. Ambassador Matlock "was told that there had been Romanian appeals for Soviet assistance - thus the instruction to me—but I have no direct knowledge of such appeals." Matlock letter to the author, 21 May 1997.
- ²⁴ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, p. 86.
- ²⁵ Oberdorfer, "Baker Implies U.S. Would Back East-Bloc Military Aid to Rebels," p. A40.

²⁶ For a detailed hour-by-hour chronology of the Timisoara events, based on eyewitness reports and contemporary documents, see Florin Medeleet and Mihai Ziman, *O Cronica a Revolutiei Din Timisoara 16-22 Decembrie D1*

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accumulated over [many] years, with low living standards, the lack of basic food and consumer goods, and with the unwillingness of the leadership to undertake at least some measures to democratize the political system.

The Ambassador pointed out that the Yugoslav public is very concerned about the situation in the neighboring country. The mass media of the SFRY are informing the population in detail about the events, including many reports about reactions abroad. On 19 December the



Stalemate in an Era of Change: New Sources and Questions on Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Soviet/Russian-Japanese Relations

by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa

New archival materials from the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe have significantly altered previous conceptions of the Cold War. Soviet-Japanese relations, however, have made little progress. Not a single article focusing on Soviet-Japanese relations has, until now, been published in the *CWIHP Bulletin*.¹ Nor has Cold War coverage in *Diplomatic History* or the H-Diplo internet discussion group extended to Soviet-Japanese relations. The most recent monograph by Vojtech Mastny that cast a wide net over archival materials in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe reveals no new materials on the rivalry of the two giants on the remote shores of the Pacific.² Although Michael Schaller's monograph and Marc Gallichio's article shed light on important aspects of American foreign policy toward Soviet-Japanese relations, especially during the last stage of the Pacific War, their sources come exclusively from United States archives.³ Many monographs published in English in recent years have illuminated very little of the fundamental questions that have vexed Soviet-Japanese relations during the Cold War.⁴

Needless to say, the most serious stumbling block that has prevented rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Japan has been the Northern Territories dispute, and precisely on this issue there has been what might be called a "conspiracy of silence" with regard to government archival sources.⁵ Archival materials related to the Northern Territories question have been systematically excluded from the Japanese foreign policy archives that have been declassified by the Gaimusho (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The Soviet/Russian government has been equally protective in guarding the secrecy of its policy on the territorial question, although there have been attempts to publish archival sources on some aspects of Soviet-Japanese relations, notably the Neutrality Pact negotiations of 1941, the Malik-Hirota negotiations in June 1945, and the Moscow negotiations for normalization of relations in October 1956.⁶ To make matters worse, some of the most important U.S. documents that should illuminate the background of this dispute are still classified "due to the request of a friendly country [i.e., Japan]."⁷ The recent valiant attempt by a trilateral project headed by Graham Allison, Kimura Hiroshi, and Konstantin Sarkisov, to overcome this obstacle has not been successful.⁸ Interestingly, two of the most valuable recent works on this subject rely heavily on British archives.⁹

The only scholar, who has had systematic access to Soviet archives is Boris N. Slavinskii of Moscow's Institute of World Economy and International Relations.

In a series of articles and monographs, he has succeeded in revising the traditional official views on the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact, Stalin's Kurile operation, and Soviet policy toward the San Francisco Peace Conference.¹⁰ Those archives that Slavinskii has examined remain, however, inaccessible to foreign scholars.

Because of the inaccessibility of archives, we still do not know answers to crucial questions about Soviet/Russian-Japanese relations. What was the major motivation of the Soviet government when it was approached by the Japanese government to mediate the termination of war in April 1945? What was the relationship between the U.S. decision to drop the atomic bombs and Stalin's Kurile operation in the summer of 1945? Did Stalin expect the United States to occupy all or at least some of the southern Kuriles during the last stage of the Pacific War? Why did it take two years after the occupation of the southern Kuriles for Stalin to annex the Kuriles to the Soviet territory? Why did the Soviet government decide to participate in the San Francisco Peace Conference and in the end not to sign the treaty? How did the power struggle within the CPSU affect its negotiations for normalization of relations with Japan? How did the Gaimusho and the U.S. State Department exchange information during the Soviet-Japanese negotiations for normalization of relations in 1955-56? Why did the Japanese government reject Andrei Gromyko's overtures in 1972 to settle the territorial question on the basis of the 1956 Joint Declaration? Why did the Soviet leadership fail to display a more flexible attitude toward Japan on the territorial question during the second half of the 1970s, when it took the Chinese threat seriously? Why did the Japanese government fail to appreciate the domestic difficulties that challenged Gorbachev and Yeltsin? Why did Gorbachev refuse to make any concessions on the Northern Territories question? Why did Yeltsin cancel his planned trip to Tokyo in September 1992? To answer these questions, we must push forward research in Japanese, Russian, and US archives, and pressure those governments to release those materials which remain classified.

The publication of the documents in this issue is a small step toward opening substantial archival evidence on Soviet-Japanese relations. These documents shed light on some important aspects of Soviet-Japanese relations under Gorbachev and of Russian-Japanese relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Soviet-Japanese relations in the Gorbachev era represented an anomaly in international relations. While all major powers in the world drastically improved their

Third, the exchange of arguments and counter-arguments at the Working Group indicates how widely respective positions on the territorial issue differed. The Working Group meetings were used, not to seek a mutually acceptable compromise, but rather for the two sides to present ultimatums to each other. Each time one side made a point, it was rejected by the other side at the following meeting, citing legal and historical justifications.¹² Thus, the Working Group meetings served only to harden disagreements and hostility rather than formulate concessions and compromises. As of spring 1989, there were no grounds to expect a major breakthrough from a Gorbachev visit to Japan.

This brings us to the fourth point. One is puzzled, as were the Gaimusho officials at the time, by the contradictory signals that came from the Soviet side. If the Soviet government agreed to establish a Working Group designed to produce a peace treaty, thus implying flexibility, then why did it take a rigid stance on the territorial issue? In fact, Rogachev's position did not even consider adopting any of the compromise solutions advocated by more reform-minded Russian Japanologists, who took advantage of glasnost to voice views divergent from the official position. Did the Foreign Ministry simply not consider these compromise solutions? Was there internal disagreement? Or was the tough position presented here a tactical ploy, a necessary step toward future concessions? Where did Gorbachev stand on this matter at the time? All these questions cannot be answered definitively by analyzing these documents alone.

As for Gorbachev's position, one is struck with the consistency with which he held his view on the territorial question throughout his tenure of office. From his meeting with Foreign Minister Abe Shintaro in May 1986 through his meeting with Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki in Tokyo in April 1992, he steadfastly maintained that the Soviet Union was not in a position to make *any* territorial concessions to Japan's irredentist demand. It was not that Gorbachev could not accept a compromise solution during his visit to Japan because of the domestic pressure, as is often believed, but that Gorbachev himself was the major stumbling block to such a compromise. One important source describing Gorbachev's view on Soviet-Japanese relations in general and on the territorial question in particular is the supplement made by Anatolii Cherniaev to the Japanese version of his memoirs, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym* (Moscow: Kul'tura, 1993), which was published under the Japanese title, *Gorubachofu to unmei o tomonishita 2000 nichi* (Tokyo: Uchio shuppan, 1994). Excerpts from this additional chapter, previously unavailable in English, are provided below.

Finally, a question can be raised about the relationship between the Soviet position enunciated by Rogachev here and the official position adopted by the Russian government after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the Russian Foreign Ministry document introduced in the second group indicates, Moscow accepted almost all the

arguments that the Japanese government had presented at the Working Group meetings during the Gorbachev period. This was, however, an internal paper. It is doubtful that the Russian government conceded all these points to the Japanese government during the official negotiations with Japan. Since we have no access to the minutes of the Working Group meetings after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we do not have a definitive answer as to where the Russian government currently stands on these questions.

The second group of documents includes various position papers prepared by different organizations and experts for the parliamentary hearings on the "Kurile question" prior to Boris Yeltsin's scheduled trip to Japan to meet Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi in September 1992.

If Gorbachev failed to achieve rapprochement with Japan, Yeltsin has been equally unsuccessful in dealing with Japan. Despite initial euphoria following the collapse of the Soviet Union, rapprochement on the territorial question proved elusive. Contrary to the expectations of Yeltsin and Deputy Foreign Minister Georgii Kunadze, who spearheaded Russia's negotiations with Japan, there emerged strong domestic opposition to any putative compromise on the territorial issue with Japan. In fact, the "Kurile issue" became a hotly debated issue in the summer of 1992, a few months prior to Yeltsin's scheduled September visit to Japan. Eventually this stumbling block derailed Yeltsin's scheduled trip to Japan, which was ultimately cancelled.

On 28 July 1992, a powerful opposition group within the Parliament organized parliamentary hearings on Yeltsin's forthcoming visit to Japan. Prior to these hearings, Oleg Rumiantsev, the Secretary of the Constitutional Commission, who masterminded the hearings, requested various organizations to submit their position papers on the "Kurile" issue. The documents in the second group are translations of some of these positions papers.¹³

One can see from these documents that the views expressed by various organizations and individuals varied widely. While the Second Department of the Asia-Pacific Region of the Russian Foreign Ministry took a most sympathetic view of the Japanese official position, Kiril Cherevko (Institute of History), a noted historian on Soviet-Japanese relations, and V. K. Zilanov, who represented the State Committee of Fisheries, took the opposite view, recommending that no concessions be made to Japan's irredentist demands.¹⁴ The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), headed by Vladlen Martynov, organized a team of specialists on Soviet-Japanese relations, and submitted a position paper. Its recommendation fell somewhere between these two extremes, but stood for the acceptance of the 1956 Joint Declaration. The resolution of the Sakhalin Supreme Soviet also indicated that the local voice increasingly asserted its influence. It is likely that these recommendations were also sent to Yeltsin. When Yeltsin said that he had fourteen options with regard to the territorial question, perhaps his statement reflected the truth.

Eventually, Yeltsin canceled his trip to Japan, thus, forfeiting the opportunity to create the foundation for gradual improvement of relations, if not for a quick resolution to the territorial question. Five years later, we are still waiting. The documents introduced here illustrate the complexities of the political dynamics under which Gorbachev, and then Yeltsin, had to operate. They also show how unrealistic it was for the Japanese government to press hard on Yeltsin to accept Japan's sovereignty, residual or otherwise, over the entire four islands.

Needless to say, these documents expose merely a tip of the gigantic iceberg of information which is still hidden under the sea of secrecy. They illuminate only a few tiny spots in recent Soviet/Russian-Japanese relations. Also the manner in which these documents have fallen into my hands—not through the open, systematic, institutional approach, but through coincidence and accident—is not reassuring. Of course, having only one side's account leaves many doubts that can only be fully answered by comparable openness on the Japanese side. Even the Russian materials lose much of their importance, unless they are placed in the appropriate archival context. Nevertheless, I hope that the publication of these sources will stimulate further openness, research and collaboration among scholars and governments in order to move the historical study of Soviet/Russian-Japanese relations further into the mainstream of scholarly inquiry.

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa is Professor of Russian History at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He is the author of The February Revolution: Petrograd, 1917 (Seattle, 1981) and co-editor of Russia and Japan: An Unresolved Dilemma Between Distant Neighbors (Berkeley, CA, 1993).

¹ *Cold War International History Bulletin*, 1-9. [Ed. note: On the other hand, several articles and documents have touched on Japan and its place in the Cold War. For an example in this issue, *Bulletin 10*, see Zhai Qiang's article on the second Chinese nuclear test.]

² Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

³ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Marc Gallichio, "The Kurile Controversy: U.S. Diplomacy in the Soviet-Japanese Border Dispute, 1941-1956," *Pacific Historical Review*, LX, No. 1 (February 1991).

⁴ Myles I. C. Robertson, *Soviet Policy toward Japan: An Analysis of Trends in the 1970s and 1980s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Harry Gelman, *Russo-Japanese Relations and the Future of the U.S.-Japanese Alliance* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1993); Charles E. Ziegler, *Foreign Policy and East Asia: Learning and Adaptation in the Gorbachev Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); William Nimmo, *Japan and Russia: a Reevaluation in the Post-Soviet Era*

(Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994); and Joachim Glaubitz, *Between Tokyo and Moscow: the History of an Uneasy Relationship, 1972 to the 1990s* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995). Two excellent monographs dealing with specific aspects of Soviet-Japanese relations are: Gilbert Rozman, *Japan's Response to the Gorbachev Era, 1985-1991: A Rising Superpower Views a Declining One* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) and John J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), but because of the specific aspects to which they are devoted, new archival evidence on Soviet-Japanese relations does not emerge in these books.

⁵ In Japanese, there exist collections of documents: Shigeta Shigeru and Suezawa Shoji, *Nisso kihonbunsho shiryoshu [Soviet-Japanese Basic Documents Sourcebook]* (Tokyo: Sekai no ugoki sha, 1988); Hopporyodo mondai taisaku kyokai, *Zoho kaitei: Hopporyodo mondai shiryoshu [Northern Territories Question Sourcebook: Revised and Enlarged]*. (Tokyo: Hopporyodo mondai taisaku kyokai, 1972). See also the joint publication by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation,

Starting Point of Post-War Japanese-Soviet Relations, 1945-56] (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1993); Fiona Hill, "A Disagreement between Allies: the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet-Japanese Territorial Dispute," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, 14, No. 3 (Fall 1995).

¹⁰ Boris Slavinskii, *Sovetskaia okkupatsiia Kuril'skikh ostrovov, avgust-sentiabr' 1945 goda: dokumental'noe issledovanie* (Moscow, 1993); *Pakt o neitralitete mezhdu SSSR i Iaponiei: diplomaticheskaia istoriia, 1941-1945 gg* (Moscow: BBK, 1995)—Japanese translation, *Kosho: nisso churitsu joyaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996); "San Frantsiskii mirnyi dogovor," *Znakomites' Iaponiia*, No. 5 (1994): 53-59; No. 6 (1994): 50-58; No. 7 (1995): 74-81; and No. 8 (1995): 56-61.

¹¹ Notably Wada Haruki and Murayama Shichiro. See Wada Haruki, *Hopporyodo mondai o kangaeru [Considering the Northern Territories Question]* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1990); Murayama Shichiro, *Kuriru shoto no bunkengakuteki kenkyu [Documentological Research on the Kurile Archipelago]* (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1987).

¹² The Japanese side rebutted Rogachev's argument at the third Working Group meeting held on 29 April 1989, in Moscow. Although the minutes prepared by the Soviet Foreign Ministry

are not available to me, the Japanese argument was reported in detail in *Hopporyodo*, No. 234 (20 May 1989). But the coverage in *Hopporyodo* does not say a word about the Soviet reaction to Kuriyama's presentation.

¹³ In addition to the documents translated here, the documents I obtained included other interesting materials from various experts and organizations. I should add, however, that I did not receive position papers prepared by the General Staff and the Pacific Fleet. The General Staff's view was later publicized in a Russian newspaper. See "Glavnyi shtab VMF soglasen s genshtabom," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 30 July 1992.

¹⁴ Cherevko's view in the classified document differs vastly from the view he expressed in an open publication. He and Konstantin Sarkisov were responsible for publishing a hitherto unknown archival document demonstrating that Nicholas I's instruction to the Russian chief negotiator, Artem Putiatin, clearly took the position that Etorofu was under Japan's sovereignty. Konstantin Sarkisov and Kiril Cherevko, "Putiatinu bylo legche provesti granitsu mezhdu Rossiei i Iaponiei," *Izvestiia*, 4 October 1991.

The Last Official Foreign Visit by M.S. Gorbachev as President of the USSR: The Road to Tokyo¹

by A.S. Cherniaev

Not counting a visit to Spain (already after the [August 1991] putsch) to the opening of the [October 1991] International Conference on the Near East, M.S. [Gorbachev's] visit as head of state to Japan in April 1991 was his last. He had planned to do this throughout almost all the years of *perestroika*: [Japanese Prime Minister] Nakasone, meeting with him in Moscow in 1985,² extended an official invitation, which afterwards was confirmed by all of the Japanese political figures with whom M.S. met.

Although at the moment of this visit, Gorbachev had the huge "capital" of his policy of new thinking at his back, it [the trip] turned out to be almost the least effective in a practical sense. Overcoming the "main obstacle" in Soviet-Japanese relations was, so to speak, within arm's reach. But... objective circumstances, as well as subjective ones, prevented this.

But everything [should be told] in order.

I was not yet serving "under Gorbachev" when his first contacts with the Japanese took place—in 1985. Then, after all of his meetings with people from "capitalist countries" came under my supervision, I soon began to note that he was showing definite preference toward the Japanese.

Delegations from Japan continued to arrive, and almost every one of them requested an audience with Gorbachev. I noted that he refused almost none of the Japanese, no matter what their level. And he spoke more

and more frankly with them. But just as soon as things got to the main point which had frozen our relations for decades, Gorbachev clammed up. For him from the first—he spoke both to me and in the Politburo about this—the issue of the islands had been resolved. In general terms, the post-war settlement of state borders was considered to be axiomatic. And Gorbachev took this entirely from his predecessors (although with the Japanese islands, the issue was more complicated; the demarcation [of borders] had not been formulated according to international-legal procedure)....

[There follows a discussion of V.I. Dunaev's role in drawing Gorbachev's attention to the Japanese issue.]

Thereafter, I drew Dunaev into the preparation of the majority of the materials connected with our policy on Japanese affairs. Later, he played a large role in establishing the first contacts between Gorbachev and Roh Taewoo, the President of South Korea.

Beginning in 1986, when I [Cherniaev] became an assistant to Gorbachev, I was present at practically all of his contacts with the Japanese and took notes.

My first impression from his entirely well-wishing conversations with them was not very reassuring. The first two conversations recorded in my notebooks are discussions with one of the leaders of the Japanese Communist party. I do not want to say that Gorbachev in some way

used this channel in order to acquaint himself more indirectly with the Japanese problem and was somehow influenced by the information which he received from the communists. He knew beforehand that this information would not be objective; the CPSU's relations with the Japanese communist party had been poor for decades. The conversations with Fuwa³ to a significant degree were devoted to clearing up inter-party difficulties. Outside of this framework, a significant part of these conversations was devoted to the struggle against the nuclear threat. Although on this issue too, their positions did not coincide. The anti-American aspect of the problem was very strongly present on both sides.

Of course, Soviet-Japanese relations were also discussed. And Gorbachev genuinely tried to improve them. But, as yet, we had no policy aimed at this end. Therefore an emotional approach predominated which was obviously insufficient to "draw a line under the present and begin everything from scratch" (Gorbachev used these words more than once).

He had not yet felt the significance—governmental, political, emotional, traditional, psychological, of every sort—that the Japanese invested in the problem of the islands seized from them by Stalin after their capitulation, after the end of the Second World War. In reality, they had never belonged to Russia. Knowing this, but being driven by the inertia of the Soviet superpower, the very possibility of returning these territories had been ruled out. Sometimes, [Gorbachev] expressed himself quite definitely and sarcastically as to the hopelessness of the Japanese efforts in this regard; at the first meetings he did not even want to discuss this issue, considering the post-war territorial division to be final and irreversible everywhere. He did not recognize the problem itself which supposedly had to be resolved. According to the Gromyko formula, it had been resolved "as a result of the war." And that was the only explanation for why in actuality the four islands should belong to the Soviet Union, which, as it was said, although big, "had no excess land." Sometimes he used those words to forestall the efforts of the Japanese interlocutors to begin a discussion. There was a certain [sense of playing a negotiating] game in such a statement of the issue.

The evolution of his views on this score was slow, and took almost five years to complete. I will try to illustrate this evolution with concrete examples, relying on my records of Gorbachev's conversations with figures from the Japanese state and society....

Back in 1985 in his first meeting with Nakasone, who was then prime minister, the issue of a visit by Gorbachev to Japan came up. Afterwards, this theme arose in practically all of his conversations with the Japanese. In reply to the latest invitation to him in the conversation with Fuwa to which I have already referred, M.S. [Gorbachev] said: "I am not being evasive, I think, [in saying that], we must have the widest possible ties with our neighbor Japan along state, party and social lines. All

the more with those who are attached to the cause of strengthening relations with the Soviet Union. You can assume that we are ready to develop relations with Japan. If she [i.e. Japan] does not present us with ultimatums, then there is great potential for that. I would like to ask the question: why is Japan presenting the Soviet Union with an ultimatum, since, after all, we did not lose the war to her?"

To this Fuwa reacted curiously: "I am not Nakasone's deputy." "I will take that under advisement," M.S. countered.

Incidentally, Fuwa demanded of Gorbachev very firmly and insistently in Japanese, using a variety of different approaches, that the CPSU cut off relations with the Socialist Party of Japan, and when doing so always tried to play on the anti-imperialist ideology of the CPSU and to put forward examples proving that the Japanese socialists were actually playing into the hands of American imperialism, not to mention into the hands of [Japan's] own bourgeoisie. But Gorbachev was entirely unmoved by this. He politely explained that the CPSU would henceforward associate with all of Japan's "peace-loving forces" "in the name of their common interests."

It seems to me that there was something of a turning point in the evolution of Gorbachev's approaches to the Japanese theme in his conversation with the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Japan, Doi Takako, on 6 May 1988. A broad review of the entire circle of Soviet-Japanese relations was made. Moreover, I must say, this was done by both sides in the most delicate way, in the most benevolent spirit, with an effort to understand one another, and somehow to get closer to a realistic evaluation of Japan's place in the development of the policy of "new thinking." Every element was present in the conversation: the emotional, the psychological, and the deeply political. Concisely put, for Gorbachev, his conversation with this very kind, very intelligent, interesting, spiritually rich woman was a sort of turning-point in his understanding of the scale of the Japanese problem as a whole and the difficulty of our relations with this nation, with this state. Of course, Doi also placed emphasis on the fact that Gorbachev should come to Japan, and that this would help resolve everything more easily. She told him that if the Japanese were asked what they wanted from Soviet-Japanese relations, the majority would answer with the question: when will General Secretary Gorbachev come to Japan?

"When the time comes," Gorbachev answered, provoking general laughter. "I am ready. But is Japan ready?"

Henceforward I will cite what they said according to the stenographic record:

Doi. Japan is ready.

Gorbachev. That is unlikely.

Doi. No, it is ready. Are you hinting that if you were told clearly by the Japanese side that they want a visit from you, you would be ready to go?

Gorbachev. If as a result of that visit we could come out with something concrete.

Doi. Do you have some concrete conditions?

Gorbachev. I have in mind some conditions, but most importantly, there must be an impulse, and not only a symbolic visit. It should really move the relations of the two countries ahead. There is not enough time simply to travel around.

Doi. I understand that. But you talked about Mrs. Thatcher, that you have a sharp dialogue with her, and that you are also conducting a dialogue with other countries. But why is there no dialogue with Japan? Perhaps you think that you can find out about Japanese affairs from the USA?

Gorbachev. No, we do not want to hear about Japanese problems in English translation. To us, Japan is an independent, great figure.

Doi. That has great significance from the point of view of the improvement of relations between the two countries.

Gorbachev. My conversation with you makes the problem of a visit an immediate issue. We will think over the issue. But we need also to know the government's point of view.

Doi. When I return, I will tell the premier about this.

Gorbachev. Good.

It must be said that, in contrast to the Communist leaders, other Japanese, starting with Doi, were very delicate in their posing of the "key," the most acute, issue—that of the islands. This word itself was not pronounced in the first conversations; it was covered in the following terms: "a series of unresolved problems,"⁴ "the 1956 Declaration," [Ed. note: The 1956 Joint Declaration is discussed at length by Deputy Foreign Ministers Rogachev and Kuriyama below] and so on. Naturally, Doi could not get around this issue and asked Gorbachev what his attitude was to the diplomatic document which was ratified in 1956 and on the basis of which diplomatic relations were restored? He answered verbosely, and this position was then maintained for a long time in different forms.

Gorbachev. First of all, let us come to an understanding that we both agree that it is impossible to approach the existing realities in any other way. The 1956 Declaration was conceived in concrete conditions, in concrete political circumstances. Concrete issues were discussed. But this discussion did not end in an agreement.

Doi. Nevertheless, Paragraph 9 [Trans. Note: Paragraph 9 stated that upon conclusion of a peace treaty between Japan and the USSR, the Habomai and Shikotan Islands would be returned to Japan] was agreed upon and was included in the Declaration.

Gorbachev. I am saying that this was not arrived at through a real process. A lot of time has passed, and all of that remains in history. We have only one thing today: the post-war realities. We must start from that basis.

Doi. On what basis in particular?

Gorbachev. On the basis of the existing post-war realities. What there was in different years has not come to pass, has not been formalized. What is more, this is not our fault. I do not see any need to re-animate issues which have already passed into history. Let us operate on the basis of realities and develop our relations.

Doi. Reality consists of the fact that you consider that 2 1 at thaand develop our relations.

cultural center, a center of tourism. Then the view of the region as a whole will radically change, and joint enterprises will arise. Famous collectives like the orchestra of the Leningrad Philharmonic and the Bolshoi Theater should perform in Vladivostok. Then Japanese [visitors] will also go there.

Processes in the Soviet Union and the course of perestroika were also “subjected” to fundamental “joint” analysis. Gorbachev frankly and in detail informed Nakasone of his assessment of the situation at that moment. In reply, Nakasone demonstrated a fairly detailed knowledge of events in our country. At the end of the conversation, Nakasone politely, but firmly and concretely, approached the most difficult theme—the “obstacles in Soviet-Japanese relations.”

“I want very much to improve them,” said Nakasone. “For that reason, I came to Moscow. First, there is a territorial problem in our relations. When this territorial problem comes up in negotiations, the Soviet side right away gets angry and does not want to discuss it. I think that after 1956, when diplomatic relations were restored, too many statements which were political bluffs were made on both sides. Mr. Gorbachev, you are a jurist who graduated from Moscow University. I am also a jurist and graduate from Tokyo University. Let us talk about these problems cold-bloodedly, like jurists.”

He set out the history of the islands after the Second World War carefully and in detail, and ended with the following words: we do not think that our northern territories will be returned right away, but it is very important to act on the basis of the existing understandings which were fixed in international agreements between our two countries. That would be a great contribution to the development of relations. I am asking you, Mr. General Secretary, to approach this seriously and study the issue. We must ensure that the feelings of our two peoples in this issue be freed of emotion, and that the problem be resolved calmly.

How did Gorbachev react? His words were: “I can repeat our principled approach. We are interested in good relations with Japan. They must encompass a political dialogue, economic, scientific-technical, and cultural cooperation, and exchanges of people. We are for the broadest ties. In 1985, when I first met you, I also talked about this. What has happened over the three years since? With many countries, our relations have expanded and have become productive. But with Japan, they not only have not moved forward, but have frozen up. And in some ways, they have fallen back. We regret this. You should know that. It seems to us that in Japan an opinion has formed to the effect that the Soviet Union is more interested than Japan in an improvement in relations. I have been informed that the Japanese are concluding: the Soviet Union needs new technology. It will have to come hat in hand to Japan. That is a big mistake. If such an approach lies at the basis of Japanese policy, we will not be able to get anywhere. To one of my Japanese interlocutors I said:

We did not lose the war to you, but you are trying to dictate [terms] to us. A sort of stalemate has appeared in our relations.” And [he] continued: “We approach the post-war realities differently, and assess them differently. But they are what they are. They are based on the outcome of the war, and have been consolidated in documents. Japanese representatives, when they speak about Soviet-Japanese relations, begin with 1956. But they should begin with the post-war situation. Then 1956 also looks different.

Then, in the context of that period, in order to restore relations with Japan, to normalize them, the Soviet Union decided to make a noble step—to give away two islands. [Ed. note: According to the Russian scholar and former diplomat S. Tikhvinskii (*Problemy dal'nego vostoka*, 4-5(1995)), but as yet uncorroborated by documentation, the offer was made on 9 August 1955, the tenth anniversary of the Nagasaki atomic attack.] This was good will on the part of the Soviet Union. But from Japan’s side, a demand was immediately made for four islands. And it all came to nothing, although diplomatic relations were re-established in 1956. Japan embarked on a rapprochement with the US. The presence of the US in this region grew and took on its current dimensions. That required the Soviet Union to take steps in response.”

Further discussion between Gorbachev and Nakasone at that time came to nothing; they were both working from fixed positions; each considered himself in the right, and they really did assess the realities [of the situation] differently.

Nakasone recalled that when he was prime minister, he had invited Gorbachev to visit Japan, and Gorbachev had received [the invitation] with satisfaction. Now he, Nakasone, was confirming the invitation on behalf of all Japan.

On 5 May 1989, Gorbachev met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Uno Sosuke. At the beginning of the conversation, he immediately observed that since beginning his work as General Secretary, he, Gorbachev, had met with prominent Japanese ten times. But progress in relations was not very noticeable; relations with other countries were outstripping what the USSR had with Japan both in dynamism and in scale.

behalf of his government that Japan could not recognize the Soviet side's reasoning to the effect that from a legal and historical point of view, the four islands belonged to the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev observed that the atmosphere of relations was changing. The dialogue was becoming constructive, and a mechanism of working groups to conclude a peace treaty had been created. [Ed. note: Excerpts from two of these meetings in 1988 and 1989 can be found below in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.] He said, I am for strengthening the shoots of trust and turning cooperation into friendly relations. I am for advancing the process of mutual understanding without excluding [from consideration] any issues. In this context, he stated, I consider my visit to Japan to be crucial.

As can be seen, a nuance, a new note, appeared in this conversation: not to back off from any issues; any of them could be the subject of discussion, (and, of course, this implied!) they could not be considered to be definitively closed.

[The role of the Japanese Ambassador Edamura is discussed.]

In the evolution of the relations between the two countries, two episodes were significant, and I cannot omit them. They were different in their character, but they both signified an "approach" by Gorbachev to solving the Soviet-Japanese problem.

The first was his meeting with Ikeda⁶ in July 1990. He is a person who is famous not only in Japan. For many years, he has headed the religious-enlightenment organization "Soka Gakkai," which has a far-flung network of cultural, academic, and university centers on every continent. It devotes huge resources to the task of spiritual renewal and moral self-affirmation for thousands and thousands of people of different nationalities and creeds. It is, in its own way, a unique system which, it would seem, could have been created only by the Japanese and which embodies all of the characteristic particularities of that nation.

Ikeda for a long time had wanted to contact Gorbachev, seeing in him a "new beginning" in world politics which introduced goodness and moral principles into it. V.I. Dunaev once again helped to "bring them together."

The meeting took place in the Kremlin in one of the reception halls which was next to Gorbachev's office.

Ikeda brought a whole "team" of people with him, twelve in all. Mikhail Sergeevich had some of his close advisers and Vladislav Ivanovich [Dunaev] with him. The very ceremony of greeting was unusually warm and somehow merry. The interlocutors right away took up an "intimate," frank discussion which had, it would seem, no practical business goals.

Gorbachev talked in detail, without hiding anything, about the situation in the country at that moment—it was

already very difficult—about the motives behind his actions from the very beginning of *perestroika*, about his evident and "hidden" intentions, and as it were, "confessed" to failures and miscalculations, to the fact that what he had counted on in a number of cases had not turned out right.

[The second episode is the Gulf War.]

When the time for Gorbachev's visit was finally settled, there took place very energetic, somewhat nervous and not entirely successful diplomatic moves by both sides, especially by certain Japanese circles which had factored the visit into their domestic political game. In this sense, the visit of the General Secretary of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Japan, Ozawa Ichiro, at the end of March 1991, is curious. Gorbachev knew of this party's role in defining and carrying out state policy in Japan. He even once joked that the LDP ruled Japan even more than the CPSU in its time did the Soviet Union.

When they met in the Kremlin in the presidential office, Gorbachev defined the format of their conversation as follows: we will talk as "the leaders of the ruling parties about what we will do in the future, about how to build our inter-state relations." I hope, he went on, that we will conduct the conversation so as to prepare the visit of the president of the USSR to Japan to make it a success both for you and for us, as well as for the entire world. We must not lose touch with the domestic component of policy in each of our countries, nor with the worldwide context. For a long time everything was simple and clear: we presented each other with ultimatums - and that was all. And what became of it? We proved that we can live without one another and have managed to do so. But what is the sense of such an approach? If we seriously think over the entire path that has been taken, there can be only one conclusion: it would be better if we had cooperated during the whole period of time that has now been lost.

Gorbachev drew some comparisons. The USSR's relations with other neighboring countries in the East have moved forward. Relations with China, he said, were developing happily. We have begun diplomatic relations and a new level of contacts with South Korea, not to mention India, the ASEAN countries, and Indonesia. [Relations] with the United States have progressed so far that changes have become possible throughout the entire world.

My term in office will soon run out, he went on. However, so far I have not done anything for Soviet-Japanese relations. But it is not I who is at issue here. After all, the USSR and Japan are two great neighboring states, two great peoples. And that obliges me and us to do something together.

Ozawa in reply emphasized, incidentally, that, if it really were possible to establish new mutual relations between Japan and the USSR, it would truly be a huge contribution not only to the improvement of the political

and economic situation in the world, but also to strengthening and assuring a stable peace for the whole planet.

It was clear that Ozawa's appearance in Moscow was not accidental. It was the result of serious forethought in Japanese ruling circles. Both in the government and in the political parties, evidently, they wanted to know in advance what Gorbachev would come with. And, naturally, Ozawa wanted to be the first to bring back something fundamentally new. Being present along with V.M. Falin (he was the leader of the International Division of the CC CPSU, and the meeting was conducted, as it were, along party lines) at this meeting—which was very diplomatic in form but substantial and fairly frank, I would argue that Gorbachev's position distinctly showed more movement on this occasion than in previous negotiations with highly placed Japanese figures. I will try to illustrate this, relying on my record of the conversation.

Gorbachev again—this had become a rule [with him]—appealed to the experience garnered by the USSR and Germany. We went by the path of increasing our cooperation, Gorbachev told Ozawa. It could hardly be thought that the Soviet Union would have come to such an understanding of the issue of relations with Germany at some other time and without what we had gone through together with Europe and with the Germans. Both we and the Germans said: let history take care of itself. As a result, a solution appeared. [Ed. note: It is interesting to compare the paucity of documented literature on Russian/Soviet-Japanese postwar relations, compared to that on the German question.]

I interpreted these words as a confirmation of my inner conviction that Gorbachev was inclined to resolve the issue. To resolve it—granted, through compromise,—but in any case in such a way that it would also satisfy the Japanese. Already there was no suggestion that the issue itself did not exist, as had been the assertion in Gromyko's time, and as it was at first under Gorbachev. The problem was recognized and, this meant, it would have to be resolved. Gorbachev also proposed to resolve it within the framework of his "philosophy" of gradual movement along the lines of an all-around improvement of relations, while ever more closely including in the process everything that was connected with the islands....

In the end, after a long and roundabout discussion from both sides, Gorbachev posed the question directly: you advocate cooperation and expect courageous steps. What do you have in mind? That was the very question Ozawa was waiting for. He said the following: the entire Japanese people expects a visit from the President of the USSR. We hope that he will turn a new historical page in our relations and will lend them a new, close character. But there are problems. I think that you understand that I am talking about the four islands—Kunashir, Iturup, Habomai, and Shikotan. We are waiting for a recognition in principle from you of our country's sovereignty over these islands. I want to assure you that from the point of view of material, practical gain, these islands mean little to

Japan. This problem is a matter of principle which touches the entire people, the foundation of the entire nation.

Gorbachev once again returned to his conception: the problem was born of a historical process. And history in one way or another will resolve it. I always say: let's get away from the old position. Let's meet each other halfway. I don't see any other way. I am revealing to you our approaches on the ways to move forward.

And he went on: in recent years, the attitude toward the Japanese in our society has significantly changed. It has become very positive. But at the same time, the [public opinion] surveys both on Sakhalin and in the Khabarovsk region do mean something. Everything is

**Basic Contents
of the meeting of the working group
on peace treaty issues.**

Tokyo, 20 December 1988

At the beginning of the session I.A. Rogachev and T. Kuriyama [both Deputy Foreign Ministers] exchanged greetings.

Kuriyama. I understand the meeting of this group in the following manner: on the instructions of our [Foreign] Ministers, we have formed a working group with the aim of opening a new page in Japanese-Soviet relations through the efforts of both sides. I would like us, in the course of the group's work, to have a frank discussion in friendly circumstances, as we did at yesterday's meeting of the ministers.

I would like to propose the following order of work for the group. We have approximately 1.5 hours of time before 12 noon, and we would like to use it with maximum effectiveness. In the first half of our meeting, based on the conversation between the ministers yesterday, I would like to make a series of additions to what Mr. Uno said, as well as some elucidations of our position on the territorial issue. If you do not object, I would also like to hear your opinion on the given issue.

Yesterday Mr. Shevardnadze put forward a very interesting proposal on the creation of a continuously active group on the issues of the peace treaty which will study the issue of the conclusion of a peace treaty, and in the second half of our meeting we would like to exchange opinions on this issue.

Rogachev. I would like to note that the atmosphere at yesterday's consultations of ministers and at today's meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR with Prime Minister Takeshita was peaceful and benevolent [and], one could even say, friendly, and to express my confidence that our discussion today will proceed in the

Uno stated yesterday, the Japanese government's principal position consists of the fact that Japan will not demand the return of the southern part of Sakhalin and the Kurile islands, which it renounced in that peace treaty.

Secondly, the Japanese-Soviet Joint declaration of 1956. The contents of the 9th article of the Joint Declaration is well known to all present, and I think there is no need to set it out again.

Thirdly, the Japanese-American security treaty.

The security treaty, which was concluded by Japan to guarantee its security, has a deeply defensive character, and the fact that the USSR, referring to this treaty, in a unilateral fashion changed its attitude toward the territorial issue as expressed in the 9th article of the Joint Declaration, and, figuratively (*obrazno*) speaking, "took the four islands hostage," in our view is not compatible with the principle of leadership by [doing] right (*verkhovenstvo prava*), towards which the USSR has of late been striving.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact the presence of NATO does not pose an obstacle to normal relations between the Soviet Union and European countries which are members of that bloc. I think that the security treaty should have the same influence on Japanese-Soviet relations that the treaty on the creation of NATO has on the relations between the USSR and European states.

Yesterday Mr. Shevardnadze referred to the letters which were exchanged between the plenipotentiary of the government of Japan S. Matsumoto, and the first deputy minister of foreign affairs of the USSR, A.A. Gromyko on 29 September 1956. In regard to this, I would like to say that it is difficult for us to understand what was said yesterday by the minister of foreign affairs of the USSR.

In the course of the whole period of Japanese-Soviet negotiations at that time, the Soviet side insisted that it would resolve the territorial issue by transferring the islands of Habomai and Shikotan to Japan, although the Japanese side insisted on the return of all four islands, including the islands of Kunashir and Iturup. Because of this very issue, an agreement was not reached and it was not possible to conclude a peace treaty. That is a well-known fact, which no one can deny.

The principled position of our side is that the negotiations on the conclusion of a peace treaty should be conducted on the basis of a recognition of the Japanese-American security treaty and the confirmation of the understanding of 1973 between the leaders of our two countries on the fact that the problems left unresolved from the Second World War include the issue of the four islands [and should be conducted] in keeping with the ninth article of the Joint Declaration of 1956.

On that I would like to conclude the statement of our position and am ready to hear out your opinion on the Soviet side.

Rogachev. Thank you, Mr. Kuriyama. We have listened to your thoughts and comments with great attentiveness....

The USSR's position on the issue of a peace treaty with your country has been stated by us more than once. We considered and [still] consider that it is important to conclude a peace treaty that would make our relations stronger and more stable.

In connection with this there arises the issue of the contents of a treaty. Many issues which are usually the subject of such a treaty have already been resolved and fixed in a whole series of Soviet-Japanese agreements and in other documents, including the Joint Declaration of 1956. Besides this, it is necessary to keep in mind another factor as well, that much time has passed since the restoration of diplomatic relations between our countries.

In view of the aforementioned particularities, it seems to us that the peace treaty should first generalize and sum up the post-war development of Soviet-Japanese ties, and secondly, should define the basic principles underlying mutual relations between the two countries, the main directions and reference points for their further forward movement.

In other words, we see this document as being all-embracing, complex, and encompassing all spheres of relations between our countries. And namely the political, economic-trade, scientific-technical, fishing, and other spheres, and, of course, one of the composite parts of the treaty would be the location of the border.

I want to emphasize that the peace treaty is a complex of issues and not some single, separable issue.

Yesterday the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR made an exposition of our thoughts in connection with the historical points which you mentioned today. We consider that the excursion into history which Mr. Uno made yesterday and which we heard from you today, is useful.

A comparison of your and our evaluations of the events of the distant and recent past show that you and we differently interpret these historical events.

It is very important that neither side become emotional about this, but instead try to comprehend historical lessons and take them into account in building our future relations.

You believe that the historical facts bear witness in favor of the correctness of your position, but we have another point of view—we believe that an historical approach bears witness to the justice of our position.

You say that in the treaties of 1855 and 1875 it was made clear that the islands of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashir and Iturup are not included in the Kurile islands, but we consider that in the aforementioned treaties there are no articles which geographically define a concept of the "Kurile islands" and for that reason your understanding of these treaties is insufficient (*ne sostoiatel'no*

American Security Treaty and NATO, noting that the presence of NATO does not hinder the USSR from developing relations with the European member-countries of that bloc. However, here we have an entirely different understanding. We believe that the existence of blocs poses an obstacle to the development of normal relations, and over the course of many years our country has consequently advocated the dissolution of military blocs. Both in the East and the West we have a single approach to this issue.

Another few words about the Soviet-Japanese announcement of 1973, in which "unresolved issues" are referred to. We have more than once pointed to the fact that our Japanese colleagues here are making a one-sided and false interpretation of the contents of the formulation there. We did not recognize the "unresolvedness" (*nereshennost*) of the so-called "territorial issue." The issue of a peace treaty is another matter. We were then and remain now advocates of underpinning Soviet-Japanese relations with a stable base of agreement by concluding a peace treaty.

Kuriyama. We have listened to the comments of Deputy Minister Rogachev on the Soviet side's position on the territorial issue with great attentiveness.

We understand your comments in the following way: that the Soviet side has made an exposition to us in a complex form of its position, which we have earlier heard in parts. Frankly speaking, while listening to your comments it did not seem to me that a broadening of understanding and a convergence of both sides' positions on this issue have occurred. At the same time, just now we received from you a frank, detailed, and composite explanation of the Soviet side's position on the territorial issue.

We agree with what you have said about the necessity for us to leave aside emotion and to approach the resolution of this issue calmly.

We would like to state our thoughts and comments on the explanations of the Soviet position which you have made today, although, unfortunately, the time which has been allotted for today's meeting does not permit us to do

this. For this reason I want to propose that we prolong the

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expression “territorial issue” is not present in any of the subsequent Soviet-Japanese documents.

Afterwards, however, Japan did not make use of any of the available opportunities and refused to conclude a peace treaty on the terms of the 1956 Declaration, having put forward additional territorial claims toward the USSR. Moreover, the Japanese government began to conduct a policy toward the Soviet Union which contradicted the spirit of the Joint Declaration and the peaceful intentions expressed in the course of the negotiations on the normalization of Soviet-Japanese relations. The conclusion of the Japanese-American security treaty in 1960, directed essentially against the Soviet Union, changed the situation and confronted our country with the necessity of taking appropriate steps to defend its interests.

As is known, the law on international treaties (art. 44 of the Vienna convention on the law on international treaties of 1969) permits a unilateral refusal to observe a part of a treaty in case the treaty is violated by the other side or the situation fundamentally changes.

Now for several words on the character of the Japanese-American Treaty on mutual cooperation and security guarantees. Today, you, Mr. Kuriyama, tried to convince us that it has an exclusively defensive character....

[A short disquisition on the Japanese-American Treaty follows.]

It must be said that the destabilizing influence of the Treaty on the situation in this part of the world continues up until now and even into the future. The fact is that in keeping with the Treaty, more than 120 US military bases and establishments are located on Japanese territory, including means for delivering offensive nuclear weapons. We have in mind, in particular, F-16 fighter-bombers at the Misawa base, the cruiser “Bunker Hill” and the destroyer “Fife,” which are equipped with “Tomahawk” cruise missiles [and are] assigned to the port of Yokosuka. These are all realities which cannot be ignored.

I want once again to say that we recognize the right of each country to individual and collective self-defense, but we cannot but assess the Japanese-American “Security Treaty” as a military alliance having in addition an anti-Soviet direction....

[A presentation on the Portsmouth Treaty of 1905, its precedents and results, follows.]

Now one more thought in connection with today’s discussion.

The Japanese side asserts that the islands of Iturup, Kunashir, Habomai, and Shikotan were not seized by Japan “by force and as a result of avarice” and for that reason the relevant clause of the Cairo declaration does not apply to them.

It is well known that in the course of a long period of

time Japan used these islands as bases for aggression, including for the attack by a [naval] aviation formation on Pearl Harbor and attacks on peaceful Soviet vessels. For this reason, the confiscation of these islands from Japan after the war cannot be seen as a “territorial expansion” on the part of the victor, but should be seen as a measure taken in order to “halt and punish Japan’s aggression,” that is, in keeping with the principle of responsibility for aggression as was voiced in the very same Cairo declaration.

We have already explained our assessment of the environment in which the neutrality pact between the USSR and Japan was annulled. It is incontrovertible that responsibility for the outbreak of World War Two belongs to Hitlerist fascism together with Japanese militarism. Germany’s attack on the Soviet Union and Japan’s on the United States, as well as subsequent events, fundamentally changed the environment in which the neutrality pact between the USSR and Japan was made. The Soviet Union’s entrance into the war against Japan at the request of the Allies was a logical consequence of these changes and was dictated by the interests of ridding [all] peoples, including Japan’s, of death and suffering, [and of] restoring the foundations of peace throughout the whole world.

In your statement, you again refer to the Soviet-Japanese statement of 1973, in which unresolved issues are mentioned. I want once again to repeat that, as we have said more than once, the Japanese side is committing a one-sided, false interpretation of the sense of the formulas contained therein.

On that, permit me to finish my “short” statement.

Kuriyama. Today at the meetings of the working group on the peace treaty, the Soviet side in a comprehensive and detailed manner made an exposition of its position on each concrete aspect of the territorial issue which was raised by the Japanese side. I think that in the course of the negotiations which have taken place up until now, the Soviet side has never before given such a detailed exposition of its views. I express my sincere recognition for the comprehensive elucidation. At the same time I express a feeling of respect for the fact that the Soviet side in the process of preparation undertook very detailed research and study of the territorial issue in clarifying its position. I have materials on the table which have been prepared by my colleagues, which contain many points elucidating our position on the points you have put forward. However, insofar as today the Soviet side presented us with new arguments, I consider it expedient that we must make additional preparations for the discussion of the territorial issue and to clarify our position in the course of the following session of the working group on the peace treaty. In keeping with today’s explanations by the Soviet side of its position we again see that the positions of the Japanese and Soviet sides on this issue diverge widely, which I regret. But on the other hand, during the morning session, Mr. Rogachev touched on geographical aspects which should be included in the



prepare a summit meeting and a working group on a peace treaty, and it was approved by the Prime Minister of Japan and the Soviet leadership. The Soviet side honestly fulfilled the obligations it had taken upon itself, seriously preparing for the meeting of the working group in Tokyo and made a statement on all of the issues which constitute the concept (*poniatie*) of a peace treaty. We counted on the same approach from the Japanese side.

Unfortunately, I am obliged to state that from you we heard only a statement on the so-called "territorial issue." I am left with the impression that you are avoiding the use of the term "peace treaty." We also did not hear what the Japanese conception is, [that is] your understanding of a peace treaty. We consider that this will be a serious study, and hope that the Japanese side will make its answer at the next session of the working group.

Of course, there still remains the meeting with Mr. Uno. This is the high point of our entire work here, I mean both the consultations and the meeting of the working group. So far we have nothing about which to inform Moscow, aside from the fact that we heard the old Japanese theses on the "territorial issue." The question arises: how has the preparation for the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs benefited, let alone a summit meeting? It seems to me that our Japanese colleagues themselves will

make their own assessment of the scale of this benefit.

[Ed. note: The May 1989 Uno-Gorbachev meeting is covered in A.S. Cherniaev's memoirs, excerpted elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.]

I want to assure you that the Soviet side will make efforts toward normalizing relations with Japan. I agree that as a result of the meetings we have begun to understand each other's positions better and in this sense have deepened our mutual understanding.

Deep differences remain on the issue which you call "territorial." We will await your thoughts on the subject of our statement today after you study it.

On behalf of my comrades I want to thank you sincerely for your attention, for your hospitality, for organizing our trip around the country, and finally, for creating [good] work conditions. And on the subject of when I will meet with you, Mr. Kuriyama, we will agree separately. I mean the next meeting of the working group on the peace treaty.

Kuriyama. I agree.

[Source: Obtained by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa. Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie.]

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