

The Origin of the Northern Territories Dispute and Triangular Bargaining Dynamics among the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States

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第二次世界大戦以降未解決のまま残された北方領土問題は、現在でも日本外交における最重要課題の一つであり、多くの研究者が当該問題の起源である 1950 年代中期に行われた日ソ国交正常化交渉を分析してきた。この問題の複雑さと解決の困難さを理解するためには、同交渉を日ソ二国間関係としてのみならず、日ソ及び米国を含んだ三角形外交の枠組みの中で捉える必要がある。本稿では、米ソの対日外交戦略が本来交渉上有利な立場にあるはずの日本を非常に難しい立場に追い込んだため、北方領土問題の解決を達成できなかったのみならず、自主独立を標榜した鳩山政権の崩壊するに至ったことを検証するとともに、当時の日ソ交渉過程で日本がとった交渉戦術が今日でも当該問題の解決を難しくしていることを指摘する。

The Northern Territories issue remains one of Japan's most important diplomatic problems since the end of the Second World War. For that reason, much research has been conducted to analyze the origins of this problem, namely, the Soviet-Japanese negotiations in the mid-1950s by which the two decided to normalize diplomatic relations. In order to understand why this issue has become so complex, however, it is necessary to analyze the problem not by focusing on bilateral negotiations between the two countries, but by focusing on the triangular diplomatic interactions among the two plus the United States. This article attempts to highlight how the Soviet and US diplomatic strategies toward Japan left Japan in a difficult negotiation position, and to show why the resolution of the Northern Territories issue is politically difficult even today.

Introduction

This paper analyzes how the Northern Territories issue emerged in the mid-1950s. In so doing, the paper shows that although the issue was usually considered as a bilateral territorial dispute between Japan and the Soviet Union (or Russia today), it evolved into a very complex problem because of the triangular relations among the two disputing countries and the United States. In order to explain how the interactions among the three states complicated the Northern Territories issue, I attempt to explain how the issue was politicized in the comprehensive strategies of Soviet and US policies toward Japan. First, I focus on why the Soviet Union developed its diplomatic strategy toward Japan and how it affected Japan's negotiation position on the territorial issue. Then, I analyze how the US position on the Northern Territories issue evolved and how it affected Soviet-Japanese negotiations on the issue. Finally, I explain why resolving the Northern Territories issue between Japan and Russia remains extremely difficult even today with a brief analysis of theoretical implications about triangular bargaining among states.

1. Moscow's Intentions and Probing of Japan's Reactions

Despite limited access to Soviet government documents on Japanese-Soviet relations, it is clear that Moscow intended to improve relations with Japan and to weaken Japan's commitments to the United States. Khrushchev commented on the factors influencing Soviet policy toward Japan as follows:

Since we had absolutely no contacts with Japan, our economy and our policy suffered. The Americans, meanwhile, not only had an embassy in Tokyo, they were masters there. They behaved brazenly. They built bases. They waged an anti-Soviet policy. They incited the Japanese. They did what the most frenzied monopolists and militarists wanted them to do. They seethed with hatred against the socialist camp, primarily against the country that first raised the Marxist-Leninist banner of the working class and achieved great successes.

After Stalin's death, I spoke to Mikoyan, Bulganin, and Malenkov about it. We all agreed that we needed to find a way to sign the treaty and end the state of war with Japan. That way we could send an ambassador to Japan who would carry out proper work.¹

Some researchers argue that Khrushchev's statement suggests that Moscow's primary goal was merely to establish diplomatic relations with Japan but not to weaken the U.S.-Japanese alliance.² (Because Stalin refused to sign the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Soviet Union did not restore diplomatic relations with Japan and technically the state of war continued.) In June 1952, the Japanese government deprived the Soviet officials in Tokyo of their special diplomatic rights to stay in Japan, making it difficult for the Soviets to support Soviet sympathizers there. Under such circumstances, Soviet leaders may have considered it beneficial to restore diplomatic relations with Japan, so that they could manipulate anti-U.S. elements in Japan.

However, the goal of normalizing relations with Japan needs to be analyzed in a larger context. Ivan I. Kovalenko, a senior Soviet diplomat deeply involved in Soviet policy toward Japan, stated that Moscow's ultimate goal was to neutralize Japan and to drive a wedge between the United States and Japan. He further pointed out that Moscow tried to achieve these goals by peaceful means:

After the victory of the Communist revolution in China, the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union targeted their efforts toward Japan. They tried to entice Japan directly or indirectly toward the Sino-Soviet bloc... After the three years of the Korean War ended with no substantial gain, the Soviet and Chinese leaders were searching for a new approach to wean Japan away from the United States and to bring it closer to the Asian communist countries... If Japan became neutral and ousted U.S. forces, the basis of U.S. military and political influence in this region would have been dealt a fatal blow... Under that situation, the Politburo ordered the

¹ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* (Boston: Little & Brown, 1990), p. 85. Although Khrushchev indicates that he initiated a change in Soviet policy toward Japan, it is unclear who originally proposed the idea to the Politburo. However, it is reasonable to consider that the main CPSU leaders, except Molotov, agreed on the policy change.

² Alexei V. Zagorsky, "Reconciliation in the Fifties: The Logic of Soviet Decision Making," in Gilbert Rozman, ed. *Japan and Russia: The Torturous Path to Normalization, 1949-1999* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 47-72.

International Department to make a long-term plan... It was directed that we should achieve the goals by peaceful means and without using force.³

Judging from Khrushchev's and Kovalenko's statements, it is most appropriate to interpret that the overall policy goal of the Soviet Union was to weaken Japan's commitments to the United States. Normalizing relations with Japan was a part of this Soviet policy. Soviet leaders were certainly aware of the growing anti-American sentiment in Japan and were searching for a means to exploit it. Establishing diplomatic relations with Japan was a process through which the Soviets could propagate a friendly image of the Soviet Union and manipulate anti-American sentiment in Japan.⁴

Engaging Japan in the Negotiation on Normalizing Relations

Moscow began to signal its interests in normalizing relations with Japan more actively after the death of Stalin. On August 8, 1953, Georgi M. Malenkov, a leading member of the post-Stalin leadership, announced at the Supreme Soviet that "it is an urgent matter to normalize relations with all Asian countries, Japan in particular." In the same speech, he indicated that Japan should act more independently from the United States as a precondition for normalizing Japanese-Soviet relations.⁵ Similar statements were made by First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Y. Vyshinskii and Foreign Minister Molotov in July and September 1954, respectively. In October 1954, China and the Soviet Union issued a joint declaration expressing their willingness to normalize relations with Japan. This declaration showed Moscow's more accommodating approach, since, unlike previous statements, it did not attach any preconditions.⁶

This policy change was in line with Moscow's overall post-Stalin diplomacy of a peace offensive toward the West: Moscow took steps to end the Korean War, and played an active role at the 1954 Geneva Conference. In particular, the Red Army's withdrawal from Austria in exchange for Austrian neutrality drew the attention of Western diplomats, as they feared that a Soviet peace offensive might weaken the solidarity of the West. These tactics of a "peace offensive" remained an important pillar of Soviet foreign policy even after Khrushchev prevailed over Malenkov in the Soviet leadership struggle.

A great opportunity for Moscow to implement the new policy came with the accession of Japan's new Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichiro in December 1954. Despite his profile as a staunch anticommunist, Hatoyama did not perceive the communist bloc as a serious threat.⁷ Instead, he believed that Japan's insecurity resulted from

³ Ivan I. Kovalenko, *Tainichi kosaku no kaiso* (Memoir on operations toward Japan) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjusha, 1996), pp. 134-5. Kovalenko was Vice Director of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee.

⁴ Tanaka Takahiko, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 64-5, 154; Hasegawa Tsuyoshi, *The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California, International Area Studies, 1998), p. 134.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-7; Hasegawa, *The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations*, p. 15. The joint declaration paved the way for the Soviet "peace offensive" toward Japan because the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty prohibited either of the two states from changing its policy toward Japan unilaterally.

⁷ NSC 5416/1, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1955-57*: 23 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), pp. 55-6.

what he considered the extremely ideological anticommunist policy pursued by the United States. Hatoyama believed that his predecessors' pro-U.S. policy increased the risk that Japan might be entrapped in U.S.-Soviet confrontations unnecessarily, and advocated improving relations with the Soviet Union in order to reduce the risk.⁸ Soon after becoming the Prime Minister, Hatoyama, as well as Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu, expressed Japan's desire to improve relations with the Soviet Union and China.⁹

The Soviet Union responded to Hatoyama's comment very swiftly. On December 15, Moscow expressed the view, through Moscow News, that it was prepared to restore diplomatic relations with Japan, and Molotov announced the next day that Moscow was willing to start negotiations with Japan. On January 7, 1955, a Soviet diplomat in Tokyo, A. I. Domnitsky, met Hatoyama in an informal setting and presented him with the so-called "Domnitsky Note," the Soviet proposal to commence negotiations on restoring Japanese-Soviet diplomatic relations. The negotiations began in London on June 3, 1955. Japan's chief representative was Matsumoto Shunichi, a former senior diplomat and congressman. The Soviet side was represented by Soviet Ambassador to Britain Yakov Malik.

2. The Evolution of Moscow's Negotiating Strategy

Territorial Concessions as Rewards: The First Half of the London Negotiations

From the beginning of the negotiations, Soviet Representative Malik showed a willingness to conclude the negotiations successfully. When Matsumoto told Malik at the first meeting that he expected time consuming negotiations, Malik replied with a smile, "Well, I believe that two or three months should be enough."¹⁰ At the third meeting on June 14, Malik further impressed Matsumoto by presenting a detailed draft peace treaty between Japan and the USSR. Moscow's willingness to conclude the negotiations stood in sharp contrast with the reluctance of Tokyo, which only allowed Matsumoto to present Malik with a short memorandum simply listing Japan's main demands.

The Soviet draft peace treaty included some important concessions for Japan. The draft treaty made it clear that the USSR would support Japan's admission to the UN. Since the UN was in a sense a universal body including non-capitalist as well as capitalist countries, Japan attached a symbolic value to UN membership. However,

⁸ Hatoyama Ichiro, *Hatoyama Ichiro kaikoroku* (Memoir of Ichiro Hatoyama) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjusha, 1957), pp. 116-7. The popularity of Hatoyama indicated that his viewpoint about US policy was shared by many Japanese. The poll conducted by *Asahi Shinbun*, a Japanese major newspaper, showed forty percent of those polled approved of the Hatoyama Cabinet, while only eight percent disapproved of it in January 1955. In comparison, another survey by the newspaper done in May 1954 showed 23 percent approval and 48 percent disapproval of the previous cabinet led by Yoshida Shigeru, who had pursued pro-U.S. policy. Kimie Hara, *Japanese-Soviet/Russian Relations since 1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 247.

⁹ Ishimaru Kazuto, Hirokazu Matsumoto and Tuyoshi Yamamoto, eds., *Sengo nihon gaikoshi* (Diplomatic history of post-war Japan), Part II (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1983), p. 10; Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 83-6; Hasegawa, *The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations*, p. 107.

¹⁰ Matsumoto Shunichi, *Moisukuwa ni kakeru niji* (Rainbow hanging over Moscow) (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1966), p. 29.

the Soviet Union had been using its veto against Japan's admission to the UN. For this reason, the Japanese Prime Minister had been arguing that normalizing "relations with the Soviet Union is necessary for Japan to join the UN and to gain an equal status to (that of) any other country."¹¹

On the Japanese Prisoners of War (POW) issue, Malik promised that the remaining POWs would be returned after diplomatic relations were restored.¹² In late 1953, the Japanese government estimated that about 12,000 Japanese POWs captured during WWII were still held in the Soviet Union. Since their repatriation had become an important political goal for Japan, this concession was received favorably by the Japanese negotiation team.¹³

In addition, the draft treaty did not make any reference to Japan's future recognition of the PRC, despite Moscow's previous demand that Japan should recognize the PRC. The omission of this issue was important, because the Japanese government continued non-recognition of the PRC under pressure from the United States. The linkage between the PRC issue and Japanese-Soviet negotiations would have made it almost impossible for Japan to continue the negotiations.¹⁴

It is true that the Soviet draft treaty did contain clauses that Japan found difficult to accept. On the territorial issue, the Soviet side took the position that the territorial issues had already been resolved by the Yalta Agreement, demanding that Japan acknowledge Soviet sovereignty over the disputed territories. This Soviet position contradicted Japan's negotiating position that Japan would seek some concessions on territorial issues.¹⁵ Equally problematic was the Soviet demand that targeted the U.S.-Japan alliance: the Soviet draft treaty prohibited Japan from joining any alliance hostile to the USSR, thus requiring Japan to terminate the U.S.-Japan alliance. Also, the draft treaty demanded that Japan prohibit the passage of U.S. naval ships through Japanese waters. Given the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance, Japan simply could not accept these demands.

However, Matsumoto correctly assessed that these Soviet demands did not represent Moscow's genuine objectives but its bargaining tactics. It is not uncommon that negotiating parties make the maximum demands at first, so that they may withdraw some of the demands as concessions. In Matsumoto's view, the fact that Malik presented a comprehensive draft peace treaty strongly indicated Moscow's determination to restore diplomatic relations with Japan.¹⁶

Indeed, the Soviet "peace offensive" intensified after Malik briefly returned to Moscow, where he probably consulted with Soviet leaders on how to proceed with

¹¹ Hatoyama, *Hatoyama Ichiro kaikoroku*, p. 198.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 33; Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 124-6. Although the Japanese government demanded that the USSR return the POWs immediately, it did not expect the USSR to do so before establishing diplomatic relations.

¹³ William F. Nimmo, *Japan and Russia: A Reevaluation in the Post-Soviet Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp. 36-7, 44; Hasegawa, *The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations*, pp. 62-5. According to polls, the Japanese consistently considered the POW issue the most important and urgent reason for normalizing relations with the Soviet Union. Donald Hellman, *Japanese Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics: The Peace Agreement with the Soviet Union* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 81-2.

¹⁴ Kubota Masaaki, *Kuremurin heno shisetsu: hoppo ryodo kosho 1955-1983* (Missions to the Kremlin: Northern Territories Negotiation, 1955-1983) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjusha, 1983), pp. 37-8.

¹⁵ Matsumoto, *Moisukuwa ni kakeru niiji*, p. 31.

¹⁶ Kubota, *Kuremurin heno shisetsu*, pp. 39-40.

the negotiations. On July 26, he told Matsumoto that the USSR would not object to dropping the Soviet demand regarding the abandonment of an alliance with the United States. He also promised to repatriate sixteen Japanese POWs immediately.¹⁷

More importantly, the Soviet Union made a significant concession on the territorial issues. On August 4, Malik asked Matsumoto informally what Japan's final position on the territorial issue was. Matsumoto gave a very subtle reply, saying, "The Japanese people consider that Habomai and Shikotan Islands were a part of Hokkaido. Considering historical reasons, it would also be next to impossible to withdraw a demand for the Kurile Islands and Southern Sakhalin."¹⁸ Despite what this reply appeared to express, Matsumoto in fact indicated that Japan distinguished Habomai and Shikotan from the Kurile Islands, and that Japan might give up the Kuriles while adamantly demanding the return of the two islands. Probably understanding Matsumoto's intentions, Malik formally proposed on August 9 that the Soviet Union would be willing to return Habomai and Shikotan to Japan.¹⁹ In his memoirs, Khrushchev explained why the Soviets were ready to make this compromise:

Why were we willing to yield on the issue of the islands? We felt that this concession really meant very little to the Soviet Union. The islands were deserted; they were used only by fishermen and also by our defense forces. In these days of modern military technology, the islands really have very little value for defense... Nor have the islands ever had any economic value... On the other side of the equation, the friendship that we would have gained with the Japanese people would have colossal importance.²⁰

Of course, Khrushchev was aware that the Soviet territorial concession would have a significant impact on U.S.-Japan relations: the resolution of the Japanese-Soviet territorial dispute would make the U.S. presence in Okinawa appear more unjust and exacerbate the Japanese people's anti-American sentiments. In his memoirs, he comments:

There was, naturally, great dissatisfaction in Japan, first because of Hiroshima and Nagasaki... Also, the Japanese lost Okinawa to American occupation - a fact that could have been a major impetus for friendship with the Soviet Union... I told Molotov, "The biggest favor we could do for the Americans would be stubbornly to reject contacts with Japan. That would give them a chance to exercise absolute power there and to turn Japan steadily against the Soviet Union. We'll be making it easy for the Americans to claim that the Soviet Union illegally seized this or that piece of territory..."²¹

As Soviet leaders anticipated, the use of territorial concessions as carrots influenced the Japanese delegations. Before coming to London, they were given an instruction paper on the negotiations, called *kunrei juroku go* (Instruction No. 16).²²

¹⁷ Matsumoto, *Moisukuwa ni kakeru niji*, pp. 37-8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁹ Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 150-153.

²⁰ Khrushchev, *The Glasnost Tape*, p. 89.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²² Kubota pointed out the existence of the instruction earlier. Kubota, *Kuremurin heno shisetsu*, pp. 32-4, 74-5. Although the Foreign Ministry of Japan has yet to disclose any document regarding the negotiations, Tanaka found that the document that the Foreign Ministry sent to the U.S. State Department in order to explain Japan's negotiation

According to the document, the return of Habomai and Shikotan Islands was the minimum but sufficient condition for concluding the negotiations. Given that Japan had renounced sovereignty over the Kuriles and Southern Sakhalin at the San Francisco Conference, the Japanese government considered that regaining the Kuriles was next to impossible. Matsumoto sent a secret telegram about the Soviet concession to Tokyo, expecting that it would serve as a basis for a successful negotiation.

Japan's Unexpected Response: The Second Half of the London Negotiations

For Soviet leaders, who had correctly assessed a point of compromise with Tokyo, Tokyo's response must have been an unpleasant surprise. Instead of reciprocating the Soviets' concessions, the Japanese put forward additional territorial demands. On August 30, Matsumoto presented Malik with the following counterproposals:

- Etorofu and Kunashiri Islands, as well as Habomai and Shikotan Islands, shall be returned to Japan.
- The jurisdiction of the rest of the disputed territories shall be decided at an international conference attended by the Allied states, including the United States.²³

Wada Haruki, a leading expert on the Japanese-Soviet territorial dispute, points out convincingly that Japan had never proposed a four-island formula formally at any international conference prior to August 1955.²⁴ As explained above, *kunrei juroku go* did not make any reference to Etorofu and Kunashiri. The legal basis of Japan's demand for the two additional islands was weak at best: at the San Francisco Peace Conference, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru had renounced Japan's sovereignty over the Kuriles, to which Etorofu and Kunashiri belong. In fact, prior to the conference, the Japanese government sought to obtain U.S. support for Japan's claim over all of the four islands. The U.S. government objected to Japan's claim, however, holding the opinion that Etorofu and Kunashiri were part of the Kuriles. As a result, the Japanese government focused on regaining Habomai and Shikotan, while giving up Etorofu and Kunashiri.²⁵ So long as Japan's claim over Habomai and Shikotan was based on the argument that *they belong to Hokkaido but not to the Kuriles*, demanding the two additional islands that were considered parts of the Kuriles was awkward.

Wada and other researchers argue that Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru and other senior diplomats, who were pro-U.S. in the Japanese government, engineered Japan's counterproposals. Since they were concerned with a probable negative reaction to Japanese-Soviet rapprochement by the United States, they

position was identical to Instruction No. 16. Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 95-97.

²³ Matsumoto, *Moisukuwa ni kakeru niiji*, p. 47.

²⁴ Wada, *Hoppo ryodo mondai o kangaeru* (Contemplating the Northern Territories issue) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), p. 146; Wada Haruki, "The San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Definition of the Kurile Islands," in Rozman, ed., *Japan and Russia*, pp. 15-32; Hara, *Japanese-Soviet/Russian Relations since 1945*, pp. 24-34, 65.

²⁵ Wada Haruki, *Hoppo ryodo mondai* (Northern Territories Issues) (Tokyo: Asahi Newspaper Co., 1999), pp. 192-218.

decided to present tougher conditions that the Soviets would find unreasonable, hoping at least to slow down the negotiations.²⁶

Listening to Japan's counterproposals, Malik angrily, and quite appropriately, accused the Japanese government of bargaining in bad faith. As a result, the negotiations in London became deadlocked and were suspended from September 1955 to January 1956. The negotiation ended on March 20, 1956 without even scheduling the next round of negotiations.

Forcing Japan to Negotiate: The First Moscow Negotiations

On September 21, 1955, Khrushchev and Bulganin met a group of Japanese legislators visiting Moscow. About a week before the meeting, the Soviet Union and West Germany had restored diplomatic relations without resolving territorial issues. Named after West German Chancellor Adenauer, this way of restoring diplomatic relations was called "the Adenauer formula." At the meeting with Japanese legislators, Khrushchev pointed out that it had taken only a few days to conclude a negotiation with West Germany, and criticized the Japanese government for its lack of sincerity in the London negotiations. While confirming that the Soviet Union would return Habomai and Shikotan Islands if a peace treaty were to be concluded, Khrushchev made it clear that no further compromise was possible. He also referred to economic relations with Japan, saying, "If Japan increased trade with China, Korea and the Soviet Union, Japan could satisfy its needs."²⁷

On March 21, 1956, the day after the last meeting of the London negotiation, the Soviet Council of Ministers announced that the Soviet Union had decided to impose restrictions on fishing in international waters near the Kuriles in order to force Japan to start another round of negotiations as soon as possible. The decision required foreign (i.e., Japanese) fishing vessels to obtain fishing licenses from the Soviet government, which would not issue such licenses without diplomatic relations, and it limited the amount of fish that Japanese fishing vessels were allowed to capture.²⁸ Although the unilateral Soviet decision was expected to cause little economic damage, it created a political problem for Hatoyama's ruling party because the fishing industry was a strong supporter of the ruling party.²⁹

In order to resolve this fishery dispute, the Japanese government sent Minister of Agriculture Kono Ichiro to Moscow. Kono and Soviet leaders conducted negotiations from April 29 to May 14. During the negotiations, Soviet Minister of Fisheries Alexandr A. Ishikov proposed the conclusion of a permanent treaty on fisheries, but suggested that the treaty take effect only after Tokyo and Moscow restored diplomatic relations.³⁰ Furthermore, Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai A. Bulganin told Kono that Japan should consider the Adenauer formula, if it was

²⁶ Wada, *Hoppo ryodo mondai o kangaeru*, pp. 156-72; Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 160-167; Kubota, *Kuremurin heno shisetsu*, pp. 18-20.

²⁷ Ishimaru, *et al.*, *Sengo nihon gaikoshi*, pp. 62-7.

²⁸ Savitri Vishwanathan, *Normalization of Japanese-Soviet Relations, 1945-1970* (Tallahassee, FL: The Diplomatic Press, 1973), pp. 113-6.

²⁹ Ishimaru, *et al.*, *Sengo nihon gaikoshi*, pp. 89-90; Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 207-8; Hellman, *Japanese Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics*, pp. 130-3. Although the San Francisco Peace Treaty allowed Japan to conduct commercial fishing in the northern Pacific, the Soviets refused to abide by the treaty because it had not signed the treaty, and often arrested Japanese fishermen for entering what the Soviet Union considered its territorial waters.

³⁰ Kono Ichiro, *Imadakara hanasou* (Now I will tell) (Tokyo: Shunyodo, 1958), pp. 21-2.

difficult to resolve the territorial dispute. Kono had no choice but to agree to resume the negotiations on diplomatic relations before the end of July 1956 in exchange for a tentative agreement on fisheries.

The two countries resumed negotiations in Moscow on July 31. At the first meeting, Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru, Japan's Chief Representative, repeated Japan's position that the four islands be returned to Japan, while implying that Japan might acquiesce to Soviet sovereignty over the rest of the territories.³¹ In response, Soviet Foreign Minister Dimitri T. Shepilov emphasized at the second meeting that the return of Habomai and Shikotan was Moscow's final concession.³²

This put Shigemitsu in an awkward position. Shigemitsu was a leading pro-U.S. member in the Hatoyama cabinet, who was reluctant to normalize relations with the Soviet Union. Given that the Soviets held the keys to resolving the UN membership and POW issues, however, Japan had no choice but to normalize relations with the Soviet Union. At the same time, he was also aware that Japan's chance of obtaining any territorial concessions would significantly diminish once diplomatic relations were established, and thus the Adenauer formula was difficult to accept.³³ Considering these factors, Shigemitsu was strongly inclined to accept the Soviet offer on August 12.³⁴

To Shigemitsu's displeasure, two factors constrained him from concluding the negotiations. The first factor was Japanese domestic politics. The Japanese government instructed Shigemitsu not to conclude the negotiations at this point: because domestic opposition to giving up Etorofu and Kunashiri had become too strong, accepting the Soviet proposal was worse than obtaining nothing. The second was the pressure from the United States. Shigemitsu was instructed by the Japanese government to go to London, where the conference on the Suez Crisis was to be held.³⁵ There, he met Secretary of State Dulles, and was shocked by Dulles' strong warning against making territorial compromise with the Soviets, as discussed later in this chapter. While still believing that Japan should have accepted the Soviet proposal, Shigemitsu went back to Tokyo without ever returning to Moscow.³⁶

Moscow's Limited Success: The Second Round of Moscow Negotiations

Moscow finally succeeded in restoring diplomatic relations with Japan when Hatoyama himself led the delegation to Moscow in October 1956. Before Hatoyama's Moscow visit, the Soviet Union had obtained Tokyo's consent to the idea that Japan would adopt the Adenauer formula, on the condition that

³¹ Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 235-6; Ishimaru et al., *Sengo nihon gaikoshi*, p. 110.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 111-113; Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 237-8; Kubota, *Kuremurin heno shusetsu*, p. 133.

³³ Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 244-5. Shigemitsu stayed in the same room where Adenauer had stayed during the negotiations in Moscow. Learning this, he wrote in his diary, "I feel odd." Shigemitsu Mamoru, *Shigemitsu Mamoru shuki* (Mamoru Shigemitsu's memos) (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1988), p. 790.

³⁴ Shigemitsu Mamoru, entry on August 12, 1956, pp. 795-6. Tanaka analyzes Shigemitsu's motives in details. Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 244-249.

³⁵ Ishimaru et al., *Sengo nihon gaikoshi*, p. 115.

³⁶ Shigemitsu, *Zoku shigemitsu mamoru shuki*, p. 796; Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, p. 268; Ishimaru et al., *Sengo nihon gaikoshi*, p. 121.

negotiations on the disputed territories continue even after normalizing relations.³⁷ On October 15, Bulganin and Hatoyama confirmed that the negotiations should be based on the Adenauer formula.³⁸

Despite the agreement on the Adenauer formula, however, the Soviets had to face Japan's persisting territorial demands. On October 15, Kono asked Ishikov to arrange meetings with Khrushchev behind the scenes. He also conveyed Japan's wish to include in the prospective joint declaration an explicit statement that the USSR would return Habomai and Shikotan upon the conclusion of a future peace treaty, and that the status of the other territories would be decided in future negotiations.³⁹ While Khrushchev was irritated by Japan's double-standard diplomacy, he put forth a new counterproposal: the two islands would be returned after the United States returned Okinawa and other territories to Japan.⁴⁰ By making the fate of Kunashiri and Etorofu contingent upon the return of Okinawa, Khrushchev sought to stir up anti-American nationalism in Japan. Kono protested strongly against the reference to Okinawa, fearing that it would infuriate the United States. In the end, it was agreed that Kunashiri and Etorofu would be returned to Japan after the peace treaty was concluded in the future, without any reference to Okinawa. Japan also succeeded in publicizing the memorandum in which Moscow agreed to negotiate on other territorial issues. The Soviet concession on the memorandum turned out to be the key for Hatoyama to obtain enough domestic support to ratify the Japanese-Soviet Joint Declaration.

Finally, Japan and the Soviet Union signed a joint declaration on October 19. According to the declaration, the Soviet Union would support Japan's entry into the UN without conditions, and the two countries would restore diplomatic relations. The two countries also agreed to continue peace treaty negotiations in the future, while the Soviets agreed that Habomai and Shikotan would be returned upon the conclusion of the treaty. Regarding the POW issue, the Soviets agreed to immediately repatriate Japanese citizens detained in the USSR and to investigate cases of missing Japanese citizens.

On December 12, 1956, the Soviet delegation arrived in Tokyo and exchanged the memoranda of ratification of the Joint Declaration with the Japanese government. At almost the same time in New York, the UN Security Council unanimously approved Japan's application for membership of the UN. As it had promised, the Soviet Union voted for Japan's membership, and the UN General Assembly unanimously approved Japan's application on December 18. Six days later, Japanese POWs came back to Japan.⁴¹

In the long run, the Soviet Union failed to further weaken Japan's commitments to the United States. In 1960, Japan and the United States revised the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, reinvigorating the bilateral alliance. In retaliation,

³⁷ On September 29, Soviet First Assistant Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko and Matsumoto exchanged a letter confirming this point. Hatoyama had been advocating the Adenauer formula, talking publicly about the necessity to put the territorial issues on the back burner in order to restore Japanese-Soviet relations.

³⁸ For details of their speeches, Ishimaru *et al*, *Sengo nihon gaikoshi*, pp. 142-4.

³⁹ Nagoshi Kenro, *Kuremurin himitsu bunsho ha kataru* (What the Kremlin secret documents reveal) (Tokyo: Chuo Koron, 1994), pp. 217-9.

⁴⁰ Matsumoto, *Moisukuwa ni kakeru niiji*, p. 144; Hasegawa, *The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations*, pp. 129-30; Kubota, *Kuremurin heno shisetsu*, p. 208.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-4.

Khrushchev announced that the revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty violated the spirit of the Soviet-Japan Joint Declaration, and that the USSR would regard its promise of returning Habomai and Shikotan as void. In the end, the Soviet Union used the territorial concessions as a bargaining card and succeeded in restoring diplomatic relations with Japan, but failed to further weaken Japan's commitments to the United States.

3. The Evolution of U.S. Policy Toward Japan

US Policy Goals and Fear of Japan's Neutralism

The United States regarded Japan as its key ally indispensable for balancing the communist bloc in Asia. Japan was thought to be "the only country that could potentially make a significant contribution to the United States." As NSC 5416/1, the main policy paper on Japan, stated, "United States interests would best be served by a strong Japan, firmly allied with the United States, and better able to serve as a counterweight to Communist China and to contribute to free world strength in the Far East."⁴² The strategic value of Japan was all the more important for the US military because the other U.S. allies in the region, South Korea and Taiwan, remained relatively weak.⁴³

Therefore, the neutralization of Japan would have gravely worsened U.S. security in Asia. Japan was the "soul of the situation in the Far East." If Japan were not allied with the United States, the U.S. position in East Asia would "become untenable."⁴⁴ On another occasion, Eisenhower said that if the United States lost Japan, the "U.S. would be out of the Pacific and it would become a communist lake."⁴⁵ These comments show the U.S. leaders' keen awareness of the importance of an alliance with Japan.

However, US policy makers were aware of the strong neutralist and anti-US sentiments in Japan. Japan detested the U.S. policy of maintaining restrictions on Sino-Japanese trade which were more constraining than those imposed on its European allies. Japanese people were also irritated by the U.S. government's pressure on Japan to increase its military efforts. Given that the United States had imposed the constitutional prohibition on Japan's military forces after WWII, U.S. pressure for an arms buildup seemed to many Japanese a clear indication that the United States was treating Japan merely as one of its foreign policy tools. On March 1, 1954, the first U.S. hydrogen bomb test conducted in the South Pacific Ocean accidentally irradiated twenty-three Japanese tuna fishermen (the Lucky Dragon

⁴² NSC 5416/1, "U.S. Policy Toward Japan," 4/9/55, *FRUS 1955-57*: 23, Part I, p. 55.

⁴³ An excellent account of how the U.S. military policy toward South Korea and Taiwan evolved in relation with U.S. policy toward Japan, Lee Jong-Wong, *Higashi ajia reisen to kanbeinichi kankei* (The cold war in East Asia and Korean-Japanese-U.S. relations) (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1996).

⁴⁴ Michael Schaller, *Altered State: The United States and Japan Since the Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 101; Memorandum of the 210th Meeting of the NSC, 8/12/54, *FRUS 1952-24*: 12, pp. 724-33.

⁴⁵ Schaller, *Altered State*, pp. 83, 101; Supplementary notes on the meeting with the legislative leadership, 6/21/54, *FRUS 1952-54*: 14, p. 1662.

Incident).⁴⁶ These incidents increased the Japanese people's anti-American sentiments and desire for neutrality.⁴⁷

U.S. Non-Coercive Policy before the Japanese-Soviet Negotiations

U.S. apprehension over Japanese-Soviet rapprochement was evident among U.S. policy makers when Japan and the Soviet Union were about to begin negotiations. At the 244th NSC meeting on April 7, 1955, U.S. policy makers reviewed NSC 5516, U.S. policy paper on Japan. Eisenhower raised his concerns about increasing nationalism in Japan. He said that "it was very alarming to observe how the communists had managed to identify themselves and their purposes with this emergent nationalism," and that "while this phenomenon was general, Japan was a notable illustration."⁴⁸ Secretary of State Dulles also expressed his concern that the Japanese Socialist Party might eventually gain control if the Japanese Conservative Party continued weakening.⁴⁹

In order to prevent the rise of anti-American nationalism in Japan, U.S. leaders considered that the United States should demonstrate its benign attitude and avoid using coercive policies toward Japan. For instance, Dulles expressed his opposition to the Joint Chiefs of Staffs' (JCS) proposal to pressure Japan to increase its military spending. He pointed out, "We had tended to push the Japanese too hard," and argued, "We must be more cautious, because it was manifest that there was a strong pacifist sentiment abroad in Japan...we ourselves were responsible for this, since we had imposed a pacifist constitution on the Japanese." Eisenhower agreed with Dulles, saying that the United States "would be making a horrible mistake by pushing these [Japanese] people too hard."⁵⁰ Accordingly, the United States decided to avoid pressuring Japan to increase its military budget. On economic issues, the United States decided to support Japan's accession to GATT and to promote Japan's trade with southeast Asia. NSC 5516/1 reflected these decisions.⁵¹

On territorial issues, the United States had already decided to return to Japan the Amami Island group, which the United States had been administering since the end of WWII. The U.S. Ambassador to Japan, John Allison, anticipated Moscow's peace offensive toward Japan, and urged Dulles, who was visiting Japan in August 1954, to announce the decision early. He argued that the "possibility of some overt friendly gesture by [the] Russians is yet another important reason for us to announce the NSC decision regarding [the] Amami group soonest."⁵² Subsequently Dulles made the announcement on August 8. Two days later, Dulles met the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Sadao Iguchi, and conveyed the U.S. opinion on a possible Japanese-Soviet arrangement.⁵³

⁴⁶ Roger Dingman, "Alliance in Crisis: The Lucky Dragon Incident and Japanese-American Relations" in Warren Cohen and Akira Irie, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 187-214.

⁴⁷ Hatoyama, *Hatoyama Ichiro kaikoroku*, p. 198.

⁴⁸ Memo of the 244th NSC Meeting, 4/7/55, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 41.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵¹ NSC 5516/1, "US Policy Toward Japan," 4/9/55, *Ibid.*, pp. 52-62.

⁵² Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, p. 66; *FRUS 1952-54: 14, Part 2*, pp. 1468-9, 1472-3, 1477-8.

⁵³ Memo of conversation, 1/28/55, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 13.

Regarding Japan's relations with the Soviet Union, the U.S. government was trying to avoid intervention in the Soviet-Japan negotiations, at least publicly.⁵⁴ More precisely, the U.S. policy recommendation was to "take the position with the Japanese government that the United States does not object to the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR, but does oppose establishment of diplomatic relations with Communist China."⁵⁵ Because the United States had diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, it was difficult for Washington to object to the normalization of Japanese-Soviet relations.⁵⁶ On January 26, 1955, Dulles instructed the U.S. Ambassador to Tokyo to tell senior members of the Japanese Foreign Ministry that the United States would "not seek to influence the Japanese decision on [a] Soviet demarche." It was made clear, however, that the United States "would expect [that] any arrangements Japan makes with the USSR would recognize that Japan's existing treaty relations [would be] no way affected."⁵⁷

The most complex problem for U.S. policy makers was how to deal with the Japanese-Soviet territorial disputes. At the 244th NSC meeting, Dulles expressed his opposition to NSC5516, which recommended the U.S. government to "treat as legally invalid the Soviet Union's claim to sovereignty over the Kurile Islands and Southern Sakhalin." He explained that the disputes were linked to the U.S. position in Okinawa, which was a cornerstone of the U.S. military presence in the Pacific.⁵⁸

The Soviet claim to the Kuriles and Southern Sakhalin was substantively the same as our claim to be in the Ryukyus [Okinawa] and the Bonin Islands. Accordingly, in our efforts to force the Soviets out of the Kuriles and Southern Sakhalin, we might find ourselves forced out of the Ryukyus and the Bonins... If we succeeded in getting the Russians out of the Kuriles it is certain that we would be forced out of the Ryukyus.⁵⁹

After Dulles' comment, Eisenhower stated "with a smile that it was also certain that we would not succeed in getting the Russians out of the Kuriles."⁶⁰ Reflecting Dulles' opposition, NSC 5516/1 stated that the United States should support Japan's claim over Habomai and Shikotan but should remain silent on the rest of the disputed territories.⁶¹

Deputy Undersecretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Sebald explained the U.S. position on Japanese-Soviet negotiations in detail. He estimated that "Soviet broad objectives are to weaken Japan's alliance with the United States, to establish a mission and possibly consular offices in Japan, and to get confirmation of their

⁵⁴ Sebald to Murphy, 4/20/55, *Ibid.*, pp. 65-68.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵⁶ Dulles to Allison, 1/10/55, *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. The clear opposition to the establishment of Sino-Japanese relations reflected the U.S. strong concern that the Soviet-Japanese rapprochement might lead to the Sino-Japanese rapprochement, which would undermine U.S. wedge strategy against China.

⁵⁷ Dulles to Allison, 1/26/55, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 11.

⁵⁸ According to the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, the United States retained the right to administer Okinawa and other small islands in the Pacific, while recognizing Japan's residual sovereignty over these islands. *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 43

⁵⁹ *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 43

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

territorial position in the Kuriles and South Sakhalin."⁶² As for U.S. policy, he argued that U.S. influence over Japan would be maximized if Washington "refrain(ed) from public statements on the negotiations." What the United States should do was to "exploit [less than one line still classified] serious differences between Japan and the USSR."⁶³

What "serious differences" did Sebald refer to? He estimated that the Soviet Union was unlikely to return Habomai and Shikotan.⁶⁴ Therefore, as long as Japan insisted on regaining the two islands, the territorial disputes would remain unresolved even if both countries restored diplomatic relations. If this had been the case, all the United States needed to do in order to complicate Japanese-Soviet relations would have been to support Japan's claim over Habomai and Shikotan.

However, the U.S. position was far more complex than it appeared. Because Sebald foresaw a slight chance of a Soviet concession, he argued, "[T]here are strong political reasons for encouraging Japan's claim to at least part of the Kuriles," in addition to Habomai and Shikotan. At the same time, he argued against active U.S. support for encouraging Japan to do so:

There are also reasons why we should not seek to change the status quo: any U.S. action supporting Japan's claim to the Kuriles might appear to reflect on our position ... in the Ryukyus and might affect the status of Formosa, which Japan also renounced under the [San Francisco Peace] treaty; encouragement of Japanese irredentism in the north might also encourage it in the south; the hostile presence of the Soviet Union on Japan's northern border will serve as a constant irritant in their relations.⁶⁵

Judging from Sebald's arguments, the best scenario for the United States would be that Japan insist on getting back more territories than just Habomai and Shikotan. Since the Soviet Union would in no way give up all or a part of the Kuriles, Japan's claim to these islands would ensure that the territorial disputes remained between Tokyo and Moscow. However, the United States was reluctant to encourage Japan to make more territorial demands for the reasons pointed out by Sebald. Therefore, the U.S. government did *not object* to Japan's efforts to get all or part of the Kuriles, not because it hoped Japan would regain the Kuriles but because Japan's insistence on doing so was the surest way to keep Japanese-Soviet relations uneasy. Allison communicated the U.S. position to a senior Foreign Ministry official in Tokyo in late April or early May.⁶⁶

As explained already, Japan's initial goal in the negotiations with the Soviets was to regain Habomai and Shikotan. Although this was not what Sebald had wished, U.S. policy makers were not disappointed at this point because they still believed that the Soviet Union would not give up Habomai and Shikotan.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-6.

⁶⁴ This assessment is shared by Secretary of State Dulles. *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 29.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 66.

⁶⁶ Wada, *Hoppo ryodo mondai*, p. 236. Wada's argument is based on Kajiura Atsushi, *Hoppo ryodo, ryukyu o meguru america no sentryaku, 1941-1956* (U.S. strategy regarding the northern territories and the Ryukyus) (Dissertation: University of Tokyo, 1993).

Soviet Territorial Concessions and U.S. Policy Shift

As Japanese-Soviet negotiations were about to begin, U.S. policy makers began to doubt their early assessment regarding the possibility of Soviet territorial concessions. Just before the negotiations began, the Soviets had agreed to withdraw from Austria in return for Austria's neutrality.⁶⁷ This Soviet decision probably reminded U.S. policy makers that the Soviets might return Habomai and Shikotan to Japan in order to create a benign image of the Soviet Union and to direct Japanese people's attention to the U.S. position in Okinawa.⁶⁸

Allison pointed out this danger in his analysis of the Japanese negotiation position dated June 1, 1955. He lamented that public opinion in Japan was too optimistic about the prospect of Soviet-Japan rapprochement, and that the Japanese Foreign Ministry was "ill prepared if the Soviets proposed a plan which aims at strengthening neutral factions in Japan."⁶⁹ Therefore, Allison argued, the best means for the Soviets to strengthen Japan's neutralism would be to offer a territorial concession to Japan. Even though such an initiative might not damage the U.S.-Japan alliance immediately, Allison anticipated, it would have a strong impact with a minimum of concessions on Moscow's part.

Although how the United States responded to Malik's territorial concession remains classified, it is highly likely that the U.S. position was one of the factors that influenced Japan to demand two additional islands—Kunashiri and Etorofu—from the Soviet Union. Shigemitsu's diary shows that Shigemitsu met Allison on August 17, and archival evidence indicates that the State Department learned by at least August 22 that Japan was going to make the additional demands.⁷⁰ Wada also points that the communications between the U.S. embassy in Tokyo and the State Department in August 1955 remain highly classified.⁷¹ Given the similarity between Sebald's recommendations and Japan's response to the Soviet concession, it is plausible that the United States and Japan had at least some consultations on Japan's counterproposals to the Soviets. On August 29, two days after Matsumoto revealed Japan's counterproposal to Malik, Dulles expressed to Shigemitsu his satisfaction with Japan's negotiating position, saying, "Japan is handling the talks very well."⁷²

Nonetheless, U.S. concerns about Japanese-Soviet rapprochement continued to mount. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Walter S. Robertson wrote to Dulles on September 18 that "Hatoyama may be in a mood for compromise, particularly in view of his shaky political position and the recent decline in the influence of Shigemitsu, who had been the most outspoken advocate of hard

⁶⁷ For the negotiations on the Austria State Treaty, see U.S. Department of State, *FRUS 1955-57: 5 Austrian State Treaty: Summit and Foreign Ministers Meetings, 1955* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1988), pp. 1-117.

⁶⁸ Dulles anticipated that although the Soviets might offer the concession which would put the United States in a difficult position, they were unlikely to do so given their previous behavior. Dulles's comment in the editorial note on the March 10 NSC meeting, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, pp. 28-9.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Wada, *Hoppo ryodo mondai*, p. 240.

⁷⁰ Shigemitsu Mamoru, *Zoku Shigemitsu shuki*, p. 731; Wada, *Hoppo ryodo mondai*, pp. 240, 243-4. Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, pp. 163, 177.

⁷¹ No report by Allison to State Department in August 1955 is available, and the archival record shows that three telegrams addressed to Dulles from the U.S. Embassy in London on August 17, 24 and 31 remain classified. Wada, *Hoppo ryodo mondai*, p. 243.

⁷² Dulles-Shigemitsu meeting, 8/29/55, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 95.

bargaining with the Soviets." Although Robertson did not support explicit U.S. intervention, he believed that the United States should "make perfectly clear to the Japanese our view that Japan should do nothing implying recognition of the Soviet sovereignty [over the Kuriles and South Sakhalin]."73 On October 5, Allison reported on his meeting with Hatoyama that Hatoyama "had [the] impression [that] negotiations would be settled soon." Allison also wrote that when he recommended that Japan be patient in dealing with the Soviet Union, "Hatoyama only nodded agreement but did not comment."⁷⁴

Because of the impact the Soviet proposal had made on Japanese leaders, the United States was forced to reassess its position on the territorial issues.⁷⁵ In response to Japan's inquiry into the U.S. position on Kunashiri and Etorofu, Allison conveyed to Tokyo the U.S. opinion on the legal status of the Kuriles on October 21, 1955. According to Matsumoto's memoirs, the U.S. position was that the United States *would not oppose* Japan's demand for Kunashiri and Etorofu based on the argument that the two islands did not belong to the Kuriles. The United States also *would not oppose* Japan's making an agreement with Moscow on regaining the two islands, in exchange for Japan's renunciation of sovereignty over the Kuriles and Southern Sakhalin.⁷⁶

While the U.S. position appeared only slightly different from its previous position, there was one subtle but important difference: although the new U.S. position indirectly encouraged Japan to argue that Kunashiri and Etorofu did not belong to the Kuriles, the U.S. government had previously held the opinion that the two islands *did belong to the Kuriles* as discussed above. Then, why did the United States stake out a position that contradicted its previous opinion? On the one hand, the United States wanted Japan to demand Kunashiri and Etorofu from the Soviet Union. Of course if Japan did so, the Soviet Union surely would not accept Japan's demand. On the other hand, the San Francisco Peace Treaty required Japan to renounce sovereignty over the Kuriles. Therefore, if the United States had supported Japan's demand while accepting that the two islands belonged to the Kuriles, the United States would have been encouraging Japan to violate the treaty. Implicitly encouraging Japan to use the legal argument that the U.S. government had dismissed was the only way to balance both needs.

Secretary of State Dulles also did his best to encourage Japan not to compromise with the Soviet Union. In a series of meetings with Japanese leaders in March 1956, Dulles argued that "it was time for Japan to think again of being and acting like a great power," emphasizing that a tough negotiation, not a compromise, was the key to dealing successfully with the Soviets.⁷⁷ Dulles also said to Hatoyama

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁷⁵ Hasegawa and Wada pointed out that some crucial diplomatic exchanges between Japan and the United States, the one on August 20 in particular, remains classified. Hasegawa, *The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations*, p. 119 (fn. 35); Wada, *Hoppo ryodo mondai*, p. 243. Tanaka also pointed out that no official record on the meeting is declassified. Tanaka, *Nisso Kokko Kaifuku no Siteki Kenkyu*, p. 163. The date of the document is significant, because it was around the mid-August 1955 that Japan decided on its response to Malik's proposal.

⁷⁶ Matsumoto, *Moisukuwa ni kakeru niji*, pp. 62-4.

⁷⁷ Memo of the meeting between Dulles and Shigemitsu, 3/18/56. *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 159.

that "Japan had a greater capacity to obtain results from the Soviets than she realized."⁷⁸

Despite Dulles' verbal encouragement, U.S. policy drifted in the direction that NSC 5516/1 warned against. On May 10, 1956, Allison met Shigemitsu and told him that the United States would be gravely concerned if Japan made concessions to the Soviet Union without appropriate compromises.⁷⁹ On May 26, the State Department permitted Allison to express U.S. concerns that Japan was moving toward normalizing relations with the Soviet Union without adequate returns.⁸⁰ The June 15th progress report of NSC 5516/1 stated, "While Japan is still basically aligned with the United States, some of the ties are wearing thin."⁸¹

Sophisticated U.S. Coercion against Japan

In August 1956, U.S. policy toward Japan made a clear turn to a coercive strategy. Shigemitsu, inclined to conclude the negotiations with the Soviet Union, met Secretary of State Dulles in London on August 19. Shigemitsu asked Dulles whether the United States would accept Japan's confirmation of Soviet sovereignty over South Sakhalin and the Kuriles in return for getting back Habomai and Shikotan. Shigemitsu's words indirectly implied that he was giving serious thought to the matter.

Dulles answered negatively. He firmly argued that Japan's doing so would give the Soviet Union more benefits than promised in the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Dulles pointed out that Article 26 of the treaty would enable the treaty's signatories to claim the same benefits that the Soviet Union would gain from Japan. Furthermore, Dulles reminded Shigemitsu that the Kuriles and Okinawa were handled in the same manner in the San Francisco Peace Treaty, and warned him that if Japan made that concession to the Soviet Union, the United States would be entitled to claim full sovereignty over Okinawa.⁸² Dulles continued as follows:

In its dealings with Japan the United States has been soft where the Soviet Union has been tough. Perhaps the United States should likewise get tough.... If Japan tells the Soviet Union that it could have sovereignty over the Kuriles, then the United States will insist on sovereignty over the Ryukyus [Okinawa].⁸³

Although Dulles described his blunt threat as a suggestion that Japan could use the argument as a bargaining chip against the Soviet Union, Shigemitsu understood that Dulles made his statement as a warning.⁸⁴ Shigemitsu expressed his frustration about Dulles' statement to Matsumoto, who leaked the news to the Japanese media. As a result, Dulles' statement caused an outcry in Japan. In essence, Dulles' statement was a political statement rather than a legal interpretation of the treaty: the legal problems pointed out by Dulles had not been a problem for the United States when Japan had concluded a bilateral peace treaty with Taiwan in 1952, over which Japan had renounced sovereignty.

⁷⁸ Dulles-Hatoyama meeting, 3/19/55, *Ibid.*, pp. 166-7.

⁷⁹ Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, p. 257.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

⁸¹ A footnote to the 290th NSC meeting, 7/17/55, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 188.

⁸² Dulles-Shigemitsu meeting, 8/19/55, *Ibid.*, pp. 202-3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁸⁴ See Dulles' explanation about his remark to Shigemitsu at a press conference. U.S. Department of State, *The Department of State Bulletin* 35: 897 (September 10, 1956), p. 406.

It is also unlikely that Dulles' statement was his emotionally driven, spontaneous response to Shigemitsu. As discussed above, the U.S. non-coercive approach to Japan was gradually but steadily changing to a more coercive intervention. Furthermore, before Dulles met Shigemitsu, the State Department had already notified the Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. of the same message Dulles gave to Shigemitsu.⁸⁵ Facing a change of mind in the most outspoken pro-U.S. Japanese leader, Dulles probably thought that it was time to go beyond the existing policy guidelines.

After Dulles' statement was leaked to the Japanese media, the U.S. government departed from its previous non-intervention policy and decided to make public its position on the Japanese-Soviet negotiations.⁸⁶ On September 7, the U.S. government gave the Japanese government an aide-memoire regarding the U.S. position on the Japanese-Soviet negotiations and subsequently made it public.⁸⁷ It states:

It is the considered opinion of the United States that by virtue of the San Francisco Peace Treaty Japan does not have the right to transfer sovereignty over the territories renounced by it therein. In the opinion of the United States, the signatories of the San Francisco Peace Treaty would not be bound to accept any action of this character and they would, presumably, reserve all their rights thereunder.⁸⁸

This statement made a resolution of the Japanese-Soviet territorial disputes extremely difficult. If Japan did not have a right to transfer sovereignty over the disputed territories as the statement suggested, Japan would have nothing else to offer to regain Habomai and Shikotan. More importantly, the aide-memoire drastically altered the previous U.S. position on Kunashiri and Etorofu, showing the U.S. decision to actively support Japan's claim to sovereignty over the two islands:

The United States has reached the conclusion after careful examination of the historical facts that the islands of Etorofu and Kunashiri (along with the Habomai Islands and Shikotan which are a part of Hokkaido) have always been part of Japan proper and should in justice be acknowledged as under Japanese sovereignty.⁸⁹

Interestingly, the statement did not show whether Etorofu and Kunashiri belonged to the Kuriles in the U.S. legal position, while supporting Japan's claim over the two islands based on historical but not legal facts.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the aide memoire was issued only after the JCS had affirmed that Moscow was highly unlikely to give up Kunashiri and Etorofu because of the two islands' strategic

⁸⁵ Matsumoto, *Moisukuwa ni kakeru niji*, p. 117. Dulles himself pointed it out. *FRUS 1955-57: 23*, p. 203.

⁸⁶ Allison argued that because Dulles' statement had already caused an outcry in Japan, the United States no longer would gain much by refraining from expressing its opinions. Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, p. 270

⁸⁷ Dulles-Tani meeting, 9/7/56, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, p. 227. At the same time, U.S. Ambassador Allison gave the statement to Shigemitsu in Tokyo. Aide-Memoire was made public on September 12.

⁸⁸ *Department of State Bulletin* 35: 900 (September 24, 1956), p. 484.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

⁹⁰ Robertson to Dulles, 9/3/56, *FRUS 1955-57: 23*, pp. 216-20.

value.⁹¹ By supporting Japan's demand for the two islands, the United States made sure that the territorial disputes would not be resolved. Raymond Garthoff argued that the logic of the Cold War inevitably made the United States try to keep the territorial disputes alive.⁹²

The new U.S. position on the Japanese-Soviet territorial disputes constrained the Hatoyama cabinet from reaching a meaningful rapprochement with the Soviet Union. As explained above, Hatoyama and Bulganin had agreed to use the Adenauer formula, indicating that Japan would not require Soviet territorial concessions immediately. By making U.S. support for the future of Kunashiri and Etorofu very explicit, however, the U.S. government made Hatoyama's negotiating position appear weak in the eyes of Japanese people, and encouraged them to take a tougher bargaining position against the Soviets.

Furthermore, the content of the statement had probably been leaked to the pro-U.S. members within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) before it was made public.⁹³ On September 12, the faction led by Yoshida Shigeru, a former Prime Minister sympathetic to the United States, issued a statement that since the U.S. government supported Japan's claim to the four islands, Japan should insist on getting back the four islands from the Soviet Union without compromise.⁹⁴ On October 1, a group of about 70 LDP members expressed opposition to Hatoyama's Moscow visit and his acceptance of the Adenauer formula. The same day, the LDP's Committee on Foreign Affairs also expressed its opposition to the Adenauer formula. Because the U.S. aide-memoire split the LDP, Hatoyama was forced to depart for Moscow without support from his own party. Behind Kono's hard bargaining in Moscow was this increased pressure from the LDP.⁹⁵

The tacit U.S. warning strategy, represented by the aide memoire, turned out to be one of the factors forcing Hatoyama to resign. Neither Eisenhower nor Dulles met Hatoyama when his delegation arrived in New York on their way from Moscow. In Japan, major newspapers and business associations criticized Hatoyama for making too many concessions.⁹⁶ In the political community, not only pro-U.S. LDP members but also the socialists criticized the Japanese-Soviet Joint Declaration as a diplomatic defeat. In the end, the Joint Declaration was ratified on November 27, and Hatoyama resigned on December 20 as an exchange for the ratification.

In retrospect, the normalization of Japanese-Soviet relations forced the United States to adjust its policy toward Japan. In a memo written on January 7, 1957, Undersecretary of State Robertson argued that the United States "should now place ourselves in the position to take the initiative at the appropriate moment, in making essential adjustments with Japan." Specifically, Robertson recommended to Dulles the creation of the study group on the status of Okinawa, and suggested that the group study "the reversion of the Islands to Japan, with the extension of long-term base rights to the United States."⁹⁷ The very next day, Dulles sent a letter to

⁹¹ The Chairman of the JCS Raddy to Robertson, 8/29/56, *Ibid.*, pp. 221-2.

⁹² Raymond L. Garthoff, "A Diplomatic History of the Dispute," in James E. Goodby, Vladimir I. Ivanov and Nobuo Shimotomai, eds., *Northern Territories and Beyond: Russian, Japanese, and American Perspectives* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995), p. 19.

⁹³ Tanaka, *Nisso kokko kaifuku no siteki kenkyu*, p. 282.

⁹⁴ *Mainichi Shinbun*, 9/13/59, quoted by Ishimaru et al, *Sengo nihon gaikoshi*, p. 132.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-6.

⁹⁷ Robertson to Dulles, 1/7/57, *FRUS 1955-57: 23, Part I*, pp. 240-244.

Secretary of Defense Wilson, proposing the creation of a joint-group which would study the long-term issues concerning the status of Okinawa.⁹⁸ While more than a decade passed before the United States actually returned Okinawa to Japan, the normalization of Japanese-Soviet relations led the U.S. policy makers to reexamine fundamental U.S. policy toward Japan and to start adjusting its strategic policy regarding Okinawa.

Conclusion

This paper purports to highlight how triangular interactions among the two superpowers and Japan complicated the Northern Territories issue. What became clear from this research is that Soviet and US diplomatic strategies toward Japan influenced each other, forcing both superpowers to revise their original strategies toward Japan. The United States was originally reluctant to use coercive means to maintain Japan's alliance loyalty. However, the Soviet concession of returning Habomai and Shikotan to Japan prompted the United States to revise its policy, and it had to take the risk of alienating Japan further by using tacit and sophisticated diplomatic pressure to prevent Japan's drift toward neutralism. On the other hand, the Soviet Union, which was trying to wean Japan away from the United States, surprisingly experienced the Japanese government's unwillingness to accept Soviet territorial concessions due to the behind-the-scene US pressure on Japan, and ended up hardening its approach. Although Japan made small diplomatic gains from both superpowers because of its pivotal position among the three, increasing pressure from the superpowers put the Japanese government in an extremely difficult position and made it impossible to regain even Habomai and Shikotan.

Considering the process of the territorial negotiations between Tokyo and Moscow in the mid-1950s, it will be extremely difficult for Japan and Russia to resolve the Northern Territories issue even today. For Russia, it would be too significant a diplomatic concession to return Etorofu and Kunashiri Islands because it remembers the way in which Japan demanded them in the past. On the other hand, since the 1950s, Japan has been publicly arguing that its demand for the return of the four islands has been consistent, and most Japanese people today believe in this argument although this research as well as other relevant research suggests otherwise. It would require a major shock for either country to make a concession acceptable to the other, and without such a shock it seems inconceivable that this territorial issue will be resolved in the foreseeable future.

⁹⁸ Dulles to Wilson, 1/8/57, *Ibid.*, pp. 244-6.