

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) called for the return of Etorofu, Shikotan, Kunashiri and the Habomais group as they were not part of the Kuriles and were not surrendered under the San Francisco peace treaty, and for the disposition of the Kurile Islands proper (Uruppu to Shumushu) to be determined by a conference of the countries concerned.

The Japanese Communist Party (JCP), which had supported Moscow's claim for more than 20 years, reversed its position in 1969 and became one of the most vocal proponents of reversion.

The Japan Socialist Party (JSP - since renamed the Social Democratic Party) called for the eventual return of all islands between Hokkaido and Kamchatka.

(The JCP and JSP insisted that an abrogation of the Japan-USA security treaty be a condition of reversion.)

The Buddhist-affiliated Clean Government Party (Komeito) argued for the return of the Northern Territories, but with the added proposal that all islands from Uruppu north become a United Nations Trust territory under Japanese administration.

A common feature of the positions taken by the various parties was that little or no attention was paid to the status of Sakhalin. (Japanese authority over the island was acknowledged by the 1855 Treaty of Shimoda but was relinquished by Tokyo in 1875 in exchange for sovereignty over the remaining Kuriles. Japan was awarded title to southern Sakhalin by the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, and occupied the northern half between 1918 and 1925 in support of its Siberian intervention.)

13. A similar issue occurred in February, 1992 when Russia and South Korea announced a bilateral agreement allowing South Korea to operate in what Japan claims is disputed waters. The Japanese have lodged formal complaints in Moscow and Seoul.
14. Much of this material in this section appeared in: Stewart Henderson, "Japanese National Security Policy: Changing Perceptions and Responses", EAITC Policy Planning Staff Paper 92/1, January, 1992.
15. For the purposes of this paper, Russia is deemed the successor state to the Soviet Union.
16. Prior to the dissolution of the USSR, Soviet ground forces in the Far East numbered about 390,000 (500,000 if troops deployed along the Sino-Russian border were included) and had undergone continuous qualitative improvements in tanks, armoured infantry fighting vehicles, surface-to-surface missiles, assault helicopters and multi-rocket launchers. Over 2,300 of the Soviet Union's 8,840 combat aircraft (strategic and tactical bombers, interceptors, and patrol aircraft) were deployed in the Far East. The Pacific fleet, with 908 ships including 95 principal surface combatants and 140 submarines, was the largest in the Soviet Navy and is now the principle fleet of Russian Federation/CIS forces.
17. From 1986 until mid-1991, Soviet regional security proposals were at best challenged and at worst dismissed by Western and most Asian governments, among the most resistant being the Japanese. The long-expected visit to Japan by Gorbachev in April 1991 did not produce the anticipated breakthrough in bilateral relations that might have led to Japanese agreement - at least in principle - on the need for regional security discussions. Neither Gorbachev nor Kaifu had the domestic political backing necessary to overcome the institutional and political obstacles blocking a peace treaty. Gorbachev's new security proposals (the establishment of a five nation - USSR, USA, China, India and Japan - forum to discuss broad Asia Pacific issues; and USSR-USA-Japan trilateral discussions on regional security) were described by the Japanese as "premature".