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Although “the world has entered the post-cold-war period,” writes Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, “Russia and Japan have stood still, unable to put behind [them] not only the legacies of the cold war, but also the legacies of the war they fought fifty long years ago” (p. 2). To understand and perhaps overcome this enduring stalemate, Hasegawa has written a detailed history of Russo-Japanese relations, focused on Japanese irredentism. His handling of the historiography on the islands is wonderfully nuanced. He brings out the subtlest differences (refining the overview by Gilbert Rozman) and tries to set himself off from the dominant figures on the Japanese left (Wada Haruki) and right (Kimura Hiroshi), though he ends up closer to Wada.

Territorial questions, Hasegawa concedes, “should not consume the entirety of Russo-Japanese relations” (p. 512). But that is precisely how he frames his enormously erudite two-volume work, beginning with the first contacts in 1697 and extending up to 1998. He states that “a commonly accepted view of Russo-Japanese relations is that they have been antagonistic from the very beginning” (p. 13), and he, too, more or less adopts such a view. But George Lensen, the leading authority on the full scope of Russo-Japanese relations, demonstrated the opposite in his still unsurpassed study (cited by Hasegawa). John Stephan, another major scholar (also cited), has spent much of his career confirming Lensen’s anti-common-sense, factually based assessment that historically Russo-Japanese relations were relatively friendly, even in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. It is almost as if Hasegawa, like the Russian and Japanese governments, has become a captive of the postwar territorial conflict simply by trying to settle the matter.

The four islands, called by the Russians the southern Kurils and by the Japanese the Northern Territories, are Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan, and the Habomai group. Hasegawa chooses to call them the Northern Territories, though he claims that in choosing the Japanese terminology he does “not necessarily endorse the definition given by the Japanese government” (p. 6). He presents a scrupulously fair narrative of the historical background of the dispute, which like the choice of terminology has the effect of confirming the Japanese position that there is a dispute. At the same time, he demonstrates that appeals to history cannot establish rightful or legal ownership. If
Review Section

anyone has a “legal” or “historical” claim to the islands, it is of course the Ainu (p. 527). Hasegawa’s aim, however, is not to advocate a return to Ainu sovereignty. It is to reconcile Japan and Russia. He is not the first analyst to make such an attempt, but his effort is distinguished by substantial new research in Japanese, American, and recently declassified Russian sources.

Of particular interest are new documents from Soviet-era archives on the maneuverings in 1945. Hasegawa agrees with Japanese nationalists that when President Harry Truman learned—contrary to his worst fears—that Stalin would not advance from northern into southern Korea, Truman in effect ceded the southern Kurils to the Soviet Union. But Hasegawa emphasizes that Truman steadfastly rejected Stalin’s proposal to occupy Hokkaido from the north. In turn, Stalin refused a last-minute U.S. request for landing rights in the southern Kurils—a decision that the United States did not protest, knowing that failing to protest meant accepting Soviet control. This is how the United States “conceded” the Kurils. The key point, however, is that the Japanese could not have stopped the Soviet army from taking Hokkaido. Analysts who blame the United States for giving away Japanese territory by not taking a firmer stand on the southern Kurils will now have to contend with the fact that in mid-August 1945, not only were Soviet troops in place for a Hokkaido invasion, but, as Hasegawa shows, the order to invade had already been given. Following Truman’s refusal to sanction the invasion, however, Stalin unexpectedly rescinded his invasion order.

Hasegawa expertly narrates this complicated episode. With careful presentation of the evidence he demonstrates further that unlike the case of Hokkaido, “the Soviet operation against the southern Kurils was not planned. . . . Rather it grew, almost accidentally, out of the contingencies arising from Japan’s imminent surrender and the discontinuation of the planned attack on Hokkaido. The 87th Rifle Corps, which was supposed to be used for the attack on Hokkaido, suddenly became available” (p. 67). Opportunistically, Stalin hastened, before the Americans moved in, to add the southern Kurils to his conquests of the northern and central Kurils. But that is as far as he got. Subsequently, the United States would exclude the Soviet Union from a promised role in the occupation of Japan. Thus, as a result of Stalin’s cancellation of the Hokkaido invasion and of the U.S. decision to cede the Kurils while attempting to draw the line on Hokkaido, Japan, unlike Korea, was not divided. Surely the successful exclusion of the Soviets from the occupation and the nondivision of Japan are of far greater historical and strategic significance than the Soviet annexation of the “Northern Territories.” Imagine the postwar world with a Soviet-backed Japanese communist government and a demilitarized line in the south of Hokkaido or the north of Honshu.

But the Japanese have chosen not to see matters in this Realpolitik light. For one thing, Stalin’s halt to the Hokkaido invasion had disastrous consequences for captured Japanese soldiers. As Hasegawa nicely explains, given
the plan to invade Hokkaido, the Soviet Union decided to repatriate Japanese POWs. Once he was without the huge labor contingent anticipated from a Hokkaido invasion, however, Stalin ordered 640,000 Japanese POWs deported to the Soviet Union. In blatant violation of the Geneva Convention, the Japanese soldiers were sent to labor camps. Repatriation only began in 1947, and some POWs were not able to return home for another decade. At least 60,000 died before they could return at all; their remains are still being sought and, when found, carried back to Japan. Complicating matters, the Soviet Union lied about the number of POWs taken, their location, and their ultimate disposition. The Soviet mistreatment of the POWs, combined with brutalities committed by Soviet soldiers against civilian Japanese in Manchuria and Korea, remain palpable grievances in the Japanese memory.

Acknowledging the suffering, Hasegawa does not allow the POWs' treatment to obscure the larger complex of issues. Instead, he calls the Japanese attention to the Soviet violation of the Neutrality Pact an “obsession,” and quotes John Stephan, who soberly explains that “despite pious protestations, neither side felt bound to honor the Neutrality Pact one moment longer that it served strategic interests” (p. 42). Moreover, Hasegawa shows that if the Japanese government had accepted the Potsdam Declaration immediately, on July 26, there would have been no Soviet-Japanese War, and no Hiroshima or Nagasaki (p. 72). “Ironically,” he concludes, “it was Japan's belated acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration that prompted Stalin” to launch operations against the northern Kurils (p. 62), beginning the process by which the Japanese lost the southern Kurils, too.

Hasegawa is equally superb on the double game played by John Foster Dulles at the 1951 San Francisco Treaty negotiations. To foment long-lasting enmity between the Soviet Union and Japan, Dulles kept the geographical definition of the Kurils ambiguous (he deliberately did not include what the Japanese regarded as the “northern territories” in the definition of the Kurils). In that sense, Hasegawa writes, “the northern territories question was a creation of the United States” (p. 105). Nonetheless, the Soviets could have shocked Dulles and signed the proposed treaty, resolving the Kurils matter once and for all, and turning Japanese irredentism against the United States (over Okinawa). Instead, the Soviets refused to sign, falling into Dulles’s trap, and “the ‘northern territories question’ thus became for the U.S. government the best guarantee against Soviet-Japanese rapprochement” (p. 121).

After 1956, the diplomacy is less exciting. In 200 pages, Hasegawa covers the six years from 1985 to 1991, and in another 150 pages the seven years 1991-98. As the text makes clear, absolutely nothing resulted from the wrangling of those 13 years. Japanese prime ministers come and go; titanic struggles take place over brief, inconsequential communiques. We learn who wrote what, who said what, whose tone slightly sharpened, whose tone subtly softened. It is like watching polar ice melt a few centimeters, then
harden again, then melt again. In the 1980s and 1990s, there is the sudden injection of public opinion (surveys of islanders) and visits by Hokkaido journalists, which according to Hasegawa cracked the Gaimusho monopoly over information on the issue. For the Japanese public, this may have rendered the dispute more immediate and personal, but any movement in the Japanese or Russian government positions remains invisible, even under Hasegawa's powerful microscope.

If anything, television images and direct reporting have made the dispute less comprehensible. Hasegawa suggests that the islands encompass one of the richest fishing areas in the world (even if that view is exaggerated, Japan's territorial waters have been so depleted that any neighboring fishing grounds assume inordinate importance for Japan). He also argues that the islands carry strategic naval importance, though he notes that Geoffrey Jukes of Australia has refuted most Russian security arguments and that the Russian Pacific Fleet is downsizing anyway. Whatever their supposed significance, the islands together amount to less than 2,000 square miles of land surface. That is more than Okinawa, but less than Chiba Prefecture (and about the same as Delaware). In 1945, before the Soviet Union invaded, the Japanese population on the islands was about 18,000, many of whom, after relocating to Japan, are now dead. Almost half a century later, in 1992, the Russian population was a mere 25,000. In 1994, following a major earthquake, the islands’ population sank to around 13,000. Even more than the rest of Russia, the Kurils are in decline.

Generously, Hasegawa calls Soviet policy toward Japan “puzzling” (p. 313). But the bigger puzzle is why Japan, a world economic colossus, has made four largely uninhabited rocks in the sea the central, indeed the only, issue in its relations with one of its large neighbors. Hasegawa writes that “it is difficult for the Japanese to accept that the Soviet Union... joined the war against Japan at the request of the Allies, and that the Soviet-Japanese War had a decisive impact on the termination of the war.” In other words, the Japanese continue to treat the Soviet-Japanese War as entirely separate from the Pacific War. “To many Japanese,” he notes, “the Soviet-Japanese War [has] served as a psychological means by which the Japanese [have] acquired a sense of victimization, which [has] served as a major excuse to avoid atonement for the Pacific War” (p. 71). Here we come to the crux of the matter.

Mikhail Gorbachev, who shook the world with breakthrough agreements, visited Japan in 1989. “It gives one an eerie, surrealistic feeling to realize,” writes Hasegawa, “that three days of protracted negotiations were almost totally devoted to the northern territories issue” (p. 403). When the August 1991 putsch took place in Moscow, threatening to reverse the largely benign foreign policies of a major nuclear power, commentators in Japan fixated on the coup’s implications for a return of the northern territories. Gorbachev’s successor, the erratic Russian President Boris Yeltsin, infa-
mously cancelled a planned trip to Tokyo, but even if the last-minute can-
cellation was inept and insulting, Hasegawa shows that it is difficult to see why Yeltsin should have gone. Hasegawa also takes the Russians to task, for they “have allowed greater concessions on German reunification and the arms control issues that had more far-reaching implications for their na-
tional security” (p. 2). Well, yes, but Germany forswore much more serious territorial claims, as did countries that were attacked by the Soviet Union, such as Finland and Poland. Hasegawa’s extended presentation finds no room for such comparisons, whose absence is the book’s main shortcoming. Nor does the book place Russo-Japanese relations in the context of postwar Japanese diplomacy more generally.

Russia may or may not decide to relinquish the four Kuril islands that it grabbed viciously in war. But the irredentism on the part of the Japanese is dangerously destabilizing and could boomerang. One can only wonder what would happen in Asia if, say, China also took an unyielding position on disputed territories, to the exclusion of any other issue in its foreign relations with neighboring countries. What if Russia began to assert that the borders of the post-Soviet states are arbitrary—which they are—and began to insist on the “return” of Crimea, northern Kazakhstan, and other territories? Hasegawa does not shrink from writing of Japanese “single-mindedness, verging on simple mindedness” (p. 383) and refers to Japan’s northern territories “syndrome” (p. 295). Yet he, too, concludes, “that Ja-
pan can ultimately justify its demand that all the disputed islands be re-
turned to it and that unless Russia agrees to the return, the two countries will continue to experience strain in their relationship. . . . I belong to the Japanese who stand for the return of all four islands,” which “sooner or later will be returned to Japan” (p. 535). The frustration runs deep all around.

**NIMBY Politics in Japan: Energy Siting and the Management of Environmental Conflict.** By S. Hayden Lesbirel. Cornell University Press, Ith-

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One of the most contentious aspects of electricity production in Japan has been the siting of new power facilities. Historically, there almost always has been protest from communities targeted as sites for coal-fired power plants and nuclear energy facilities. Much of that protest has come from fishing