# The Russian Military and the Northern Territories

Geoffrey Jukes

The Russo-Japanese frontier was first demarcated by the Treaty of Shimoda in 1855. It was placed where Tsar Nicholas I wanted it, between the southern Kurile islands of Urup and Etorofu.[1] Twenty years later, in return for Japanese renunciation of all claims to Sakhalin, Russia ceded the entire Kuriles chain to Japan under the Treaty of Saint Petersburg.[2]

All the Kurile Islands were therefore Japanese for seventy years (1875-1945), and during that period no direct threat to Russian or Soviet security was mounted from them. The reason was not that Japan lacked expansionist ambitions, but that their focus was much further south, and Kamchatka and the Sea of Okhotsk were irrelevant to them. There was only minor and sporadic Japanese interference with operation of the Pacific-Trans-Siberian route through which American Lend-Lease supplies reached the Soviet Union during 1942-45. This route carried 47.1% of all US Lend-Lease shipments to the Soviet Union, slightly more than the better-known Murmansk (22.8%) and Persian Gulf (23.8%) routes combined,[3] and could not have done so if Japan had interfered seriously with it. Japan's possession of the Kuriles therefore at no time posed any direct threat to the Soviet Far East, and Stalin's basic motive for seizing them was revenge for the defeats of 1904-5, as he made clear in his statement following Japan's surrender, that "the men of the older generation have waited forty years for this day."[4] Any basis for current claims that the security of the Russian Far East requires retention of the entire Kuriles chain must therefore be sought in more recent events than those which prompted the seizure in 1945 not only of the northern islands, ceded voluntarily in 1875, but of the islands of Kunashiri, Etorofu and Shikotan and the group of islets known as the Habomais, which lay south of the 1855 border, and had never been Russian at any time.

While political and academic debate in Russia reveals a range of opinions about the issue of the "Northern Territories" published military opinion opposes their return to Japanese sovereignty on the grounds that they are "vital" to the security of the Russian Far East[5] or at the very least that to cede them would "significantly harm" Russia's strategic interests. The assertion is seldom supported by argument, or by information about precisely what capabilities Russia would lose if it ceded the disputed territories, and, not surprisingly, no attempt is made to suggest ways in which any adverse strategic consequences arising from their cession could be nullified by modifying existing or building new installations in Russian far Eastern territories not claimed by Japan.

The only Soviet-provided factual information on the Northern Territories is a figure for the number of troops, aircraft and anti-ship missile launchers stationed on them. The validity of military statements about the strategic

value of the Territories cannot be judged on the basis of these data alone. Fortunately some data are available from elsewhere, particularly a comprehensive study of the Soviet Pacific Fleet published in 1991.[6] In 1992 an exhaustive report on the Northern Territories issue was compiled by a joint US-Japanese-Russian group of scholars,[7] and a Russian admiral[8] and general[9] presented arguments in the military press for retaining the islands.

In strategic terms a distinction has to be drawn between the larger territories (Kunashiri and Etorofu) and the two smaller ones, (the Habomais and Shikotan). These last lie east of the main chain, so their value as a "barrier" to entry into the Sea of Okhotsk is much lower than that of Kunashiri and Etorofu. Their low strategic value is attested by the Soviet offer made in 1956 to return them to Japan on signature of a peace treaty. The offer was withdrawn in 1960 (after Japan concluded a Security Treaty with the USA), but the military presence comprises only an understrength infantry battalion on Shikotan and some frontier guard posts on the Habomais, and there are no major military airfields, radar or sonar stations.

Kunashiri and especially Etorofu present a different picture. They are part of the main barrier of islands separating the Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific, and their strategic role became important after 1978, when nuclear-powered submarines carrying missiles targetted on the United States began to be deployed in the Sea of Okhotsk. The archipelago thus became the eastern wall of a "sanctuary" for an important part of the Soviet strategic deterrent, and was provided with facilities and forces to protect the missile-firing submarines against penetration of the Sea by American attack submarines or aircraft carrier task groups. The most important of these are a sonar barrier laid on the seabed east of the main chain from 1981 onwards, a naval base at Burotan Bay at about the mid-point of the chain, and an airfield (Burevestnik) at Hitokappu Bay on Etorofu, with associated radars.

The high strategic value of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii dates from the end of the 1960's. In 1967 the first Soviet ballistic missile submarines became operational, enabling the Soviet Union to pose a threat to United States cities similar to that which the US Navy had posed to Soviet cities since it deployed its first "Polaris" missile submarines six years earlier. However, the Soviet missiles were of relatively short range, and could United States could be attacked only from firing points off its coasts, so that from the outset there had to be two bases. Murmansk, the Northern Fleet's main base was the obvious choice for the Atlantic boats, but the Pacific Fleet base at Vladivostok was less suitable because it is located on an enclosed sea, the exits from which are controlled by the United States and its South Korean and Japanese allies. Petropavlovsk was chosen as the Pacific missile submarine base because it lies on the east coast of Kamchatka, with direct access to the Pacific.

With development during the 1970's of longer-range missiles and submarines to carry them, it became possible for the submarines of each superpower to attack the other's cities without leaving home waters. This gave the Sea of Okhotsk a strategic importance it had hitherto lacked,

because as an enclosed sea with entirely Russian-controlled coastlines except for that of Hokkaido in its extreme south, it could relatively easily be made into a "sanctuary" for missile submarines, which would need to make only a brief open-ocean transit between it and Petropavlovsk. So from 1978 steps were taken to make the Sea of Okhotsk a more secure area, by building naval and air facilities on some of the Kurile Islands and installing seabed sonars east of them. The defences of Petropavlovsk itself were strengthened, and about one-third of the Pacific Fleet's surface warships and attack submarines were allocated to guard the "sanctuary" against intrusion by US attack submarines or carrier task forces. Army garrisons, which had been withdrawn in 1963, were reintroduced, to a total strength of about one division.

By 1990 twenty-five SLBM submarines were based in the Far East. Seven of these, of the obsolescent Yankee class, with a 1500-mile missile necessitating reaching a firing point well across the Pacific, are being phased out or converted into attack submarines, and will not be considered further. The other eighteen comprised nine of the Delta I class, based at Vladivostok, and nine of the more potent Delta III class, based at Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii, and capable of attacking US targets from positions in the Sea of Okhotsk. A surface task force headed by the Heavy Aircraft Carrying Cruiser "Novorossiisk" was also based at Petropavlovsk to protect the Sea of Okhotsk "sanctuary," as were about half the Pacific Fleet's attack submarines. There are four air bases, two for Naval Air Force anti-submarine reconaissance-strike aircraft, and one each for the Air and Air Defence Forces, air search radars and an over-the-horizon Early Warning and Ground Controlled Intercept radar. The tracking headquarters for the sonar barrier laid off the eastern shores of the islands since 1981 is almost certainly also at Petropavlovsk.[10] Its post-1978 rise created a situation undesirable in strategic principle, by compelling the Pacific Fleet to divide its main forces between the two widely separated bases of Vladivostok and Petropavlovsk, but the advantages of having a "sanctuary" for the deterrent were felt to justify the high costs involved. From 1967 to 1976 the Pacific Fleet received more new major warships than any of the other three Fleets, and from 1976 to 1989 enjoyed approximate parity in new deliveries with the Northern Fleet. Similar priority was accorded in deliveries to the Far Eastern Air, Air Defence and Naval Air forces.

The main military centres in the Kurile islands themselves are at Burotan Bay on Simushir and Hitokappu Bay on Etorofu. Burotan hosts surface-to-air missile and air search radar units, up to twelve diesel attack submarines, minesweepers, fast attack craft and support ships, and a large stockpile of mines, to be laid in several of the nearby straits in the event of war. It also has a tracking station for the sonar barrier. Hitokappu Bay (the assembly point in November 1941 of the Japanese Navy carrier force which attacked Pearl Harbour) serves several purposes. It is a dispersal base for ships normally stationed in Sakhalin, and for that role has substantial fuel,

lubricant and ammunition storage. It also has three early-warning air search radars, and an Air Defence Forces airfield at nearby Burevestnik, with about 40 interceptor aircraft and some helicopters, and a tracking station for the sonar barrier. Post-1978 militarisation of the islands also brought Ground Forces units, approximating to one Division, mostly on Etorofu, but with one regiment on Kunashiri and about one battalion on Shikotan, where there is also a fishery patrol unit of maritime Frontier Guards. According to Russian sources the Ground Force component has been reduced from 10,000 to about 7,200 men,[11] probably a reflection of the armed forces' current problems (a massive increase in draft-dodging and difficulties in supplying and feeding those conscripts who do present themselves),[12] or as a small step in the reform of the armed forces, in which overall numbers are to be cut, units stationed at Russia's periphery reduced, and a centrally-located rapid reaction force established, capable of being flown to peripheral trouble spots at very short notice.[13]

The Habomais and Shikotan lie south and east of the main chain of islands, and Soviet willingness to return them as part of a peace settlement in 1956 undoubtedly reflected their perceived lack of military value at that time. However, the Sea of Okhotsk then lacked the strategic importance it acquired after 1978. So it will now be considered whether post-1978 circumstances differ sufficiently from those of 1956 to invalidate the concession then envisaged.

The fundamental reason why the 1956 negotiations did not result in a Soviet-Japanese peace treaty was intervention by US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. For Cold-War reasons he preferred not to see Soviet-Japanese rapprochement, and notified Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu that if Japan concluded a peace treaty with return only of Shikotan and the Habomais, the United States "might remain forever in Okinawa."[14] This lever no longer exists; Okinawa was restored to Japan in 1971, and in the post Cold-War climate US administrations have less need of tension in Russo-Japanese relations.

The United States nevertheless retains an important role. However much Russian hard-liners attempt to present Japan as a growing military threat, their concern is less with what Japan might do than with what US forces might do from Japanese territory and waters, rather as Stalin viewed Finland in the late 1930's.[15]

When it comes to distinguishing between the two smaller territories and the two larger ones, the indications are ambiguous. In April 1991 the then Soviet Defence Minister, Marshal Yazov, stated categorically[16] that "all four islands [sic]" were vital, and at a Supreme Soviet hearing in July 1992 the two military spokesmen drew no distinction between the Territories in declaring that cession would significantly harm ability to defend the Far East.[17] On the other hand, the articles by Rear-Admiral Virkovskii and Major-General Mekhov, which deal with the situation in more detail, made specific references only to Kunashiri and Etorofu.

The earlier of the two, Virkovskii's, was published in March 1992. In his brief review of the military aspects of the dispute he did not mention the Sea of Okhotsk's role as an SLBM sanctuary, discussed only conventional war, and was curiously selective in respect of Hokkaido. He described it as the main jumping-off point for alleged US/Japanese plans to escalate a war in the Far East, cited the numbers of troops, tanks, guns, missiles and aircraft stationed there, and even the capacity of the Seikan Tunnel (between Honshu and Hokkaido) to convey reinforcements. But he did not note that for naval and especially air penetration of the Sea of Okhotsk, Hokkaido outflanks the Kuriles, and that the operations he alleged Japan would mount from the Southern against the Northern Kuriles could equally well or even better be mounted from Hokkaido. He castigated the Japanese "military-political leadership" for including in their comparisons Russian forces not stationed in the islands, but envisaged Japanese and American reinforcements being brought from Honshu, without mentioning the likelihood that Russian garrisons would be reinforced from the mainland. He cited "military-historical experience" for his assertion that if Japanese forces were stationed on Kunashiri and Etorofu , they would act offensively. As pointed out above, the seventy-year Japanese occupation of the Kuriles provides no historical basis for this assertion.

Virkovskii advanced a familiar political argument that cession would "create a precedent for review of existing frontiers, which Germany may exploit by presenting claims to Kaliningrad province, Finland to Pechenga and Karelia, China to areas of the Amur, Maritime Province and Transbaikal, Japan to the rest of the Kuriles and to the island of Sakhalin, the Baltic States to part of the territory of Leningrad province and the north-west provinces of Russia." He does not explain why the cession of some relatively small and remote islands should produce a flood of claims which the collapse of the Soviet Union failed to engender.

General Mekhov's article argued the military case more fully, and its publication in the forces newspaper, just before the Supreme Soviet hearing indicates that it was meant as authoritative. If that were so, its shortcomings are the more remarkable. Worst case assumptions were explicitly defended as the only reliable basis for analysis, ignoring their role in generating the arms race which helped bring down the Soviet state. And while Virkovskii was eclectic in respect to Hokkaido, Mekhov ignored its existence altogether. He stated, for example, that Japanese possession of the Territories would make the Sea of Okhotsk no longer "an internal Russian sea" (which it is not, because of Hokkaido), facilitate invasion of Sakhalin (far more easily undertaken from Hokkaido) and enable Japanese-US forces to prevent the two halves of the Russian Pacific Fleet from combining. This last is nonsense for two reasons. First, any attempt to unite the two forces requires one of them to transit the narrow Sea of Japan and one of the even narrower exits from it, hence to run the gauntlet of attacks from US/Japanese naval and air forces based in the Japanese main islands, to which any contribution from

Kunashiri or Etorofu would be marginal. Secondly, the two forces have different roles; the Vladivostok-based units' function is to defend against attack from, or to attack into, Chinese, Japanese or Korean waters, while the force based in the north exists to defend Petropavlovsk itself and the Sea of Okhotsk SLBM "sanctuary." Da Cunha noted that Soviet naval exercises post-1982 did not include a breakout from the Sea of Japan,[18] from which it can reasonably be inferred that there was no war scenario requiring the two forces to combine. That is probably why Virkovskii, no less hostile than Mekhov to cession of the Territories, but a naval officer writing for a naval audience, did not use this argument.

Mekhov also argued that loss of control over "ice-free passages" between the disputed islands would impede movement of Russian warships between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific. Here he may simply have assumed that "north is cold, south is warm," but in fact the opposite is the case where the passages between the islands are concerned.[19] The reason is simple. The Amur River contributes a large amount of very cold fresh water to the Sea, and the island of Sakhalin prevents it dispersing out to sea. It flows north and south in the Tartary Strait between the mainland and Sakhalin, lowering both the temperature and the salinity of the sea water in the west and south of the Sea. By February of an average winter the southern part of the Sea of Okhotsk is icebound up to and including the passages between the islands as far north as that between Etorofu and Urup, while from Urup northwards the ice limit is well to the west of the islands. This is clearly shown in Soviet[20] and other[21] maps. Second, Russian warships make very little use of these passages.[22] The only surface ships "programmed" to transit from the Sea of Okhotsk to the Pacific are those based in Sakhalin, which in a crisis are to move to Hitokappu Bay on the east coast of Etorofu, either for dispersal or to reinforce the forward defence. They are only a small proportion of the Pacific Fleet, and can make the transit only during the eight ice-free months May-December.

The "ice-free passage" issue is in any case a red herring. Ice is neutral, and impedes the freedom of movement of hostile intruders as much as that of Russian warships.

Limitations of military glasnost probably prevented Mekhov or Virkovskii referring to the most important reason for Russian reluctance to relinquish any territory fronting the Sea of Okhotsk. This is penetration by American nuclear-powered attack submarines, which began in 1982[23] and reportedly takes place through four straits, the most southerly of which is that between Urup and Etorofu.[24] Their purpose is to track the Russian missile submarines, an activity potentially destabilising of the strategic balance, and undoubtedly the reason for Gorbachev 's 1986[25] suggestion of a moratorium on naval operations in some parts of the Pacific basin. It is long-established Soviet/Russian practice not to call attention to adversary actions until they succeed in countering them,[26] so the lack of specific mention of US submarine activity probably means that the ASW forces have so far not been very

successful in tracking the American submarines.[27] Monitoring passage of surface warships presents no particular problem, as ordinarily competent aerial reconnaissance and radar would detect them before they reached the passages, and once in the Sea their movements can easily be followed and if necessary countered. Submarines are less easy to track, but the status of the Southern Kuriles hardly affects the threat they pose, as only one of the four passages the US boats are reported to use involves the disputed territories, and its northern shore remains Russian even if Etoforu is ceded. The two passages that would come entirely under Japanese control are less suitable for submarines,[28] particularly that between Hokkaido and Kunashiri, but even if US/Russian detente does not end these incursions, Russian military apprehensions could be met by an agreement not to allow warships of non-riparian states to use them, reinforced by guaranteeing continued operation of the seabed sonar barrier.

Mekhov's article should not be left without mentioning his effort to refute Japanese invocation of America's return of Okinawa as a precedent. He rejects it as inapplicable because American bases still occupy 20% of Okinawa, but does not explain why the Russian military needs 100% of the Northern Territories for a lesser capacity than the US forces can put into 20% of Okinawa.

General G. V. Batenin, the Russian military contributor to the Allison-Kimura-Sarkisov report, classified military opposition to returning the Habomais and Shikotan as only one-third the strength of its resistance to ceding Kunashiri and Etorofu;[29] this tends to confirm the unimportance inferred from Virkovskii's and Mekhov's lack of specific references to the smaller territories.

Because Kunashiri and Etorofu are part of the island chain guarding the "sanctuary," ceding them would certainly have some effect on Russia's security. It therefore must be considered *how large* that effect would be, and what is needed to maintain it at or above its present level. It is assumed that the seabed sonar barrier under construction since 1981 is now complete, provides coverage as far as the passage between Kunashiri and Hokkaido, and that its southern end is monitored by a tracking station at Hitokappu Bay on Etorofu. Return of the two large islands would therefore place the southern end of the barrier inside Japanese territory, along with the tracking station at Hitokappu Bay, and this is a major reason for the Russian military to oppose any change. Their objections could be met by reinforcing an agreement to exclude their use by warships of non-riparian states with one permitting Russia to continue to operate the seabed sonar barrier, receive access to it for maintenance and repair, and retain its tracking station on Etoforu until it can be moved, e.g. to Urup, or replaced by repeaters to forward its data automatically to Severokurilsk or Petropavlovsk. Movements in these straits can also be monitored by radars and shipborne sonars from international waters in the Sea of Okhotsk, and suspicious events investigated by warships or aircraft based in Sakhalin or at Burotan.

Loss of the early warning radars and air defence interceptor airfield at Burevestnik would create a gap in coverage, and it would be worth considering allowing the radars to remain until replacements can be built on an island further north, for example Urup. Yeltsin's five-stage plan calls for early "demilitarisation" of the islands; it would help defuse military objections if Japan interpreted demilitarisation as confined to removal of weapons, permitting radars and sonars to remain, and, following the precedent of the German/Soviet agreement on German reunification, allowed the combat aircraft to remain for a limited period.

The Russian Navy may object to ceding Etorofu because Hitokappu Bay is one of its dispersal bases. However, the Pacific Fleet has at least eight identified dispersal bases, and with the number of its ships reduced by approximately half since 1990 it may well be able to dispense with one of them.[30] If Hitokappu's functions include forward basing, the nearest existing alternative is Burotan Bay on Simushir, about 130 nautical miles to the north-east, about six and a half hours additional steaming for ships dispersing from Sakhalin, so substitution of Burotan for Hitokappu is not a major operating inconvenience. The changing role of navies in the post-Cold War world, and the reductions in missile submarines envisaged under the START-2 agreement will also affect the strategic importance of the Sea of Okhotsk, and hence the number of ships and aircraft deployed there. These factors will now be examined.

Following the end of the Cold War the expenditures of navies, the most expensive forces per man employed, are being curtailed, and attrition of the Russian Navy is particularly acute, because of coincidence between the block obsolescence of ships built in the Stalin era and the onset of the post-Soviet economic crisis. These have produced a rapid rundown in the number of Russian warships. According to Russian figures 91 submarines and 122 surface warships were scrapped in 1990 alone.[31] The major wave of disposals may now be over (the same source gave 1992 scrappings as down to 12 submarines and 59 surface warships), leaving the Navy with about half the ships it had in 1989. Russia's economic situation and its dispute with Ukraine (where its largest warships were built) are now falsifying the Navy's future expectations.

Where the Pacific Fleet is concerned, the rundown has reduced its strength in largest surface warships (cruisers and aircraft carriers) from sixteen to seven in less than four years.[32] Its two carriers, "Minsk" and "Novorossiisk" and one cruiser have been reduced to reserve unrepaired, and six cruisers written off.[33] The Head of Naval Construction, Rear-Admiral Belyshev, noted that the Pacific Fleet was in the worst state among the four Fleets,[34] that in 1992 repair funds met only 30% of requirements, and that the average age of its ships was about fifteen years, so 60% of them were in the second half of their life cycle.[35] A new carrier, "Varyag," meant to enter service with the Pacific Fleet in 1995, is at the fitting out berth in Nikolayev. It is about 70% complete, but work on it ceased in January 1992 for lack of funds. The yard

needs the fitting-out berth[36] for ships it is building to foreign orders, and if Russia cannot afford Ukraine's price for completion "Varyag" may be offered for sale.

A still larger, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, "Ulyanovsk," under construction in the same Ukrainian yard, and 20% complete by the end of 1991 was dismantled by Ukrainian government order in 1992, because of Russia's inability to guarantee the cost of completion, and an urgent need to free the slipway (the yard's largest) for a foreign order. So a Navy which had expected to have at least seven aircraft carriers by 1999 now has only two in service, three stored unrepaired, one (Varyag) which it will receive at least two years late if at all, and no follow-ons. The Pacific Fleet, which was intended to have three carriers (Minsk, Novorossiisk and Varyag) by 1995, and probably a fourth (sister-ship to Ulyanovsk) by or soon after 2000, now has no carrier in service, no certainty as to when or whether the two stored carriers will be refitted, or Varyag will arrive, and no follow-on carrier in prospect..

Its position with respect to smaller warships is no better, and in regard to aircraft may be even worse. Aviation Major-General N. A. Rogov, First Deputy Commander of Naval Air Forces, indicated that naval aircraft were to be cut by 20% and personnel by 30%. Numbers of missile strike aircraft with the Northern and Pacific Fleets would remain at about their current level, but ground attack, anti-submarine and reconnaissance aircraft would be reduced.[37] A more detailed and even darker picture was given by the Senior Flight Safety Inspector of the Pacific Fleet Air Forces. He stated that since 1989 supplies of fuel, lubricants and liquid gas had been cut, so severely that in November and December of 1991 numbers and duration of practice flights were severely reduced, and flights over water limited to summer because only 3% of requirements for survival suits had been met. Approximately three-quarters of the Fleet's aircraft were more than twenty years old; many were grounded for lack of spare parts and of experienced technicians in maintenance units, which were at only 65 to 80% of establishment. The accident rate was three times that of the US Air Force, and problems could not be solved with flight simulators, because they possessed these only for the newest aircraft. Condition of airfields was deteriorating, and housing for aircrew (an average of only 15 square metres per family) so unsatisfactory that they often could not obtain adequate rest between flights.[38]

These accounts clearly paint as dark a picture as possible in hopes of soliciting increased funding, but they nevertheless indicate a severely overstretched service. Where resources are unequal to commitments, the former have to be increased or the latter reduced. Institutional preferences would be for increased resources, but both the climate of east-west detente and Russia's economic problems point towards further reductions in military budgets, and therefore to reduced commitments.

To some extent this has already happened. The Russian Navy has withdrawn from the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf (except

for one ship), and the Northern Fleet now defines its area of responsibility as confined to the White and Barents Seas, no longer including the Norwegian Sea. However, the distant waters deployments did not involve large numbers of ships, and the reduction in the Northern Fleet's area of responsibility may not facilitate great economies in the short run. It no longer needs to protect SLBM boats transitting the Norwegian Sea to firing points in the Western Atlantic, but still has to protect the SLBM "sanctuary" in the Barents Sea against attempts by NATO forces to penetrate east of the North Cape-Spitzbergen gap. However, Russian naval planning must at least for the present assume that NATO will take advantage of its pull-back by occupying the vacated sea area, thus moving to the fringe of the "sanctuary." The threat from aircraft carrier groups may diminish, because NATO admirals may be reluctant to risk them[39] against the high levels of attack a main base can mount, but the threat American (or British or French) nuclear-powered attack submarines can pose to the very large and cumbersome SLBM boats in principle could even increase, because they would be much closer to their quarry before first chance of detection. In normal circumstances this would be partially compensated by the greater concentration of anti-submarine forces made possible by the reduction in the Fleet's area of responsibility. But circumstances are not normal. Numbers of new ships and aircraft, the condition and numbers in service of existing ones, time at sea or in the air, are all going down, so the Northern Fleet may not find its reduced task any easier to discharge than its previous, larger, role. For real relief it will have to rely on the growth of detente to reduce the levels of Western naval activity, as well as looking for further reductions of its own in other areas. One of these possible reductions could well affect the Northern Territories issue, and the circumstances which may facilitate it will now be examined.

Western navies are not in as economically catastrophic a position as Russia's, but defence expenditures in the USA and its allies are already facing drastic cuts because of the perceived collapse of the Soviet threat, and navies are especially vulnerable because their basic unit, a ship, costs much more on average than any tank or most aircraft. The forward deployment policies initiated in the North-West Pacific under President Reagan, and reduced but not discontinued by President Bush, are obvious targets for a Clinton administration faced with a large budget deficit, and concerned to present itself as a new leadership appropriate to a new situation. NATO navies, including the US Navy, were already being reduced before the Soviet Union collapsed. That process is intensifying,[40] and even where numbers are not reduced, the change in strategic expectations, from preparation for global war to crisis management in smaller regional conflicts, is likely to change the kinds of ships procured and the areas where they deploy, taking them away from Russian borders. Provocative forward deployments, such as those into the Sea of Okhotsk, are likely to be scaled down or terminated as inappropriate to both the new international situation and the reduced size of navies. The general replacement of confrontation by exchanges of visits,

already common between Russian and NATO officers in Europe and the United States, will probably grow from its present modest beginnings in North-East Asia into a regular process of mutual confidence-building, in which issues such as maintenance of a dispersal base, airfield and radars on Etorofu, and of a relatively small number of soldiers on Kunashiri, Etorofu and Shikotan decline in importance.

However, the START-2 Treaty signed by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin in January 1993 is likely to produce far more radical changes. Before considering them it should be recalled that the circumstances which originally caused the Far Eastern SLBM "sanctuary" to be established have mostly vanished. When the key decisions were taken,[41] Soviet submarine-borne missiles could not reach targets in the United States from home waters, and it was initially Petropavlovsk's access to the Pacific, not its proximity to the Sea of Okhotsk, which led to deployment of missile submarines there, though the ultimate "sanctuary" concept was certainly already envisaged, as construction of the first Delta I submarine began in 1969. An additional general argument then favouring more than one "sanctuary" was that of being able to attack from different angles. Prospects for anti-missile (ABM) systems were taken seriously by both superpowers during the 1960's. Most missiles then carried only one warhead, so it was theoretically possible that the USA might instal an ABM system capable of nullifying the three to eight warheads the earliest Soviet missile submarines could launch. This increased the strategic attractiveness of ability to launch from different directions, so as to outflank any ABM system the USA might deploy, or at least make deployment too expensive to contemplate.

Most of these considerations no longer apply. First SLBM boats can now attack their targets from home waters. Second, multiple-warheading has increased the number of warheads one submarine can carry from single or low double figures to a theoretical maximum of 180 (Typhoon with SS-N-20) or 160 (Delta III or IV with SS-N-23), while the number of targets has not increased commensurately. Third, with each submarine now carrying as many warheads as several of its predecessors, surprise attack becomes less likely, as even a single surviving enemy boat could destroy most or all of the attacker's main cities. Fourth, the ABM threat has not materialised. The SALT I agreements signed in 1971-72 abjured general deployment of ABMs, and though research has continued, developments in offensive warheads (multiple warheading, decoys, terminal guidance including evasive manoeuvres) have made it probable that a workable ABM system, if devised, would still be costlier to deploy than to circumvent. Fifth, the total of warheads now carried in submarines far exceeds the numbers permitted under the START-2 agreement, so the submarine force will have to be greatly reduced in order not to exceed the permitted total at 1 January 2003. The number of years of useful remaining life will be an important factor in deciding which submarines to keep, and the Petropavlovsk-based boats are on

average older than those at Murmansk. This last factor will be discussed in more detail later.

The effect of these factors is that first, Petropavlovsk's main advantage over Murmansk has disappeared; Murmansk-based SLBM boats no longer need to transit NATO-controlled waters to their firing points. Second, with multiple-warheading and larger submarines, the much-reduced number of warheads permitted under the START-2 agreement can be carried by far fewer submarines than were needed at the time it was decided to have more than one "sanctuary." Third, with the increased ranges and greater sophistication of warheads, and non-materialisation of the ABM threat, the need to attack from several different directions is reduced, and in any event the sheer numbers and diversity of paths for warheads fired by a combination of Delta class submarines from the Barents Sea, Typhoon class boats from under the Arctic ice, and land-based ICBMs from various points across Russia, probably create enough of a saturation problem for any conceivable ABM defences, and do not need supplementation from the Sea of Okhotsk.

The limited evidence so far available on re-evaluation of Russia's military posture does not suggest that any very radical thinking has yet been done. The new "doctrine" drawn up by Soviet General Staff officers in early 1992 is in some respects even more conservative than its Soviet predecessor,[42] and the categorical assertions that cession of the Northern Territories would greatly harm Russia's ability to defend its Far East suggest that maintenance of the Sea of Okhotsk "sanctuary" is still taken for granted. However, a combination of the warhead reductions under START-2 with the ageing of the Russian SLBM submarine fleet suggests that the future of the Sea of Okhotsk deployment is very much in question.

Even under the SALT agreements, which allowed much higher levels of submarine-launched nuclear weapons than does START-2, and with no economic problems comparable to those now facing Russia, there are precedents on the American side of withdrawal from distant SLBM deployment bases, solely because increases in missile range rendered them unnecessary. The US Navy has already removed its SLBM boats from Holy Loch in Scotland, Guam, and Cadiz in Spain, where they had been based since 1961, 1964 and 1965 respectively. Petropavlovsk's remoteness adds greatly to the cost of deterrence while no longer enhancing its credibility, and may even make it less credible because of the base's remoteness and vulnerability. In Russia's present economic circumstances, immediate relocation of the Petropavlovsk-based boats would probably be ruled out by the initial costs of providing facilities at Murmansk or Vladivostok for seventeen additional submarines, and housing for their crews and families. However, there is a stronger reason for leaving them where they are, which is that under the START-2 agreement they are almost certain to be scrapped by the end of 1999.

Experience with the first generation of nuclear submarines, in service from 1953 in the US Navy and 1958 in the Soviet, suggests an average life-

span of about thirty years. The Soviet SLBM submarines grouped together under the class name of Delta fall into four groups, Delta I to Delta IV. Delta Is carry twelve missiles each, and Delta II to IV sixteen. Their numbers and building dates are as follows:

| Sub-class | Number built | Years completed | Years reaching thirty |
|---|---|---|---|
| Delta I | 18 | 1972-77 | 2002-2007 |
| Delta II | 4 | 1976-77 | 2006-2007 |
| Delta III | 14 | 1976-82 | 2006-2012 |
| Delta IV | 7 (+5) | 1984-96 | 2014-2026 |

It can be seen from the table that between the years 2002 and 2012 thirty-six boats (the whole of classes Delta I-III) will reach the age of thirty, at an average rate of just over three a year. The only boats not into the last third of their life cycle at 1 January 2003 (when the reductions under START-2 are to be complete) will be the twelve Delta IVs (then with 12 to 24 years' expected service life), and the six larger Typhoon class completed between 1984 and 1989 (with 12 to 17 years' life expectation).

In 1992 the Russian Navy had 61 SSBNs in service, 37 based in in the Murmansk area and 24 in the Far East. Twelve of these were of the "Yankee" class, older than the Deltas, and carrying missiles of only 1500 nautical mile range. The older boats of this class were being scrapped, and the newer converted to attack submarines, so they will not be considered further. SSBNs with a "future" therefore totalled 49, (6 Typhoon, 18 Delta I, 4 Delta II, 14 Delta III and 7 Delta IV), with 5 more Delta IVs under construction. It is now for consideration what this force carries in the way of missiles and warheads, and in particular what its Petropavlovsk-based component contributes to its overall strength.

Delta Is carry 12 SS-N-8 (NATO Codename "Sawfly") missiles, in two variants, Mod I, with a range of 7800 km (4210 nautical miles) and a single warhead of 1.2 MT, or Mod II, range 9100 km (4910 n. m.), with two Multiple Independently Targetted Reentry Vehicles (MIRV) of 800 kT each. Information as to the "mix" is not in the public domain, so it will be assumed that they carry a 50-50 "mix" averaging 18 warheads per boat, totalling 324 warheads.

Delta IIs carry the same missile and variants, but 16 missiles each. On the same assumed "mix" they carry 24 warheads each, a total of 96 warheads.

Delta IIIs carry 16 missiles each, mostly SS-N-18 ("Stingray"), but some are reported to have been retrofitted with the newer SS-N-23 ("Skiff"). "Stingray" has three variants; Mod 1, range 6500 km (3500 nm), 3 MIRV warheads of 200 kT each, Mod 2, 8000 km (4320 nm), 1 450kT warhead, or Mod 3, 6500 km (3500 nm) and 7 MIRV warheads of 100 kT each. "Skiff" has a range of 8300 km (4500 nm) and carries up to 10 MIRV warheads of 100 kT each. Again, information on the "mix" is not in the public domain, but as "Skiff" is much more accurate than "Stingray" it will be assumed here that

the newest six Delta IIIs have been or will be equipped with it, and that they carry a "mix" averaging seven warheads per missile. For the eight older boats, assumed to carry "Stingray," it will further be assumed that the "mix" of its three variants (1, 3 or 7 warheads) provides an average of 4 warheads per missile. The total warheads carried by Delta IIIs would then be of the order of 512 in the older and 576 in the newer boats, for a total of 1088.

Delta IVs also carry 16 missiles each, all "Skiff" with up to 10 MIRV warheads. If the five under construction are completed but no more built, their contribution will comprise 1152 warheads.

The potential warheads carried by the Deltas after 1996 can therefore be summarised as follows:

Delta I, 324: II, 96: III, 1088: IV, 1152. Total, 2660 warheads.

How many of these are at Petropavlovsk depends on an additional assumption, namely whether or not any of the nine Delta IIIs there are among the six believed retrofitted with "Skiff" missiles. If none is, they carry about 512 warheads between them. If six are, they carry about 800 warheads (672 "Skiff" and 128 "Stingray"). In addition the 9 Vladivostok-based Delta Is carry 162 warheads between them, so the likely range of warheads on the Pacific-based Deltas is between 640 and 962. The lower figure is the more likely, as facilities for loading and unloading missiles appear to exist only in the Northern Fleet area.[43] There are in addition six Typhoon class boats, all based in Murmansk. These, the largest submarines ever built, came into service between 1984 and 1989. Each carries twenty SS-N-20 ("Sturgeon") missiles, with the same maximum range as "Skiff" and 6 to 9 100 kT MIRV warheads. If the "mix" of these averages 8 warheads per missile, Typhoons add 960 warheads to the 2660 in Deltas, bringing the total to 3620 warheads. Depending on whether they are taken as having 640 or 962 warheads, the Pacific-based Deltas therefore carry between 17.7% and 26.6% of all warheads, but constitute 35% of all boats. That in itself indicates a higher cost per warhead in the Pacific versus Murmansk, even without the additional costs imposed by Petropavlovsk's isolation.

The total of about 3620 warheads deployed in submarines far exceeds the 2160 permitted for the end of Stage I of START-2 (1 January 2000), and is well over double the 1700-1750 permitted at the end of Stage 2, on 1 January 2003. It must now be considered how the Russian Navy is to divest itself of over 1900 nuclear warheads in ten years, 1500 of them in the first seven, and what effect the divestment is likely to have on its SSBN basing policy.

In an interview given by Admiral Gromov soon after his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian navy, he stated that by 1999 (the end of Stage 1 of START-2) the SLBM force would be down to 24 boats. He did not give details of them, but clearly they will include the 6 Typhoons and 7 Delta IVs already in service, the 5 Delta IVs then building, and another 6 boats which will be either additional Delta IVs, or the 6 newest Delta IIIs, or some of each. The 6 Typhoons at 20 missiles each carry 120 missiles, the 18 Deltas at 16 each 288, so the total of SLBM will be 408 missiles. The maximum SLBM

warheads permitted for 1999 by START-2 is 2160, a total exactly achievable with 24 boats if 120 missiles carry 6 warheads each and the remaining 288 carry 5 each. This neatly matches an assumption that the 120 "Sturgeon" missiles on the Typhoons average 6 warheads each, and the 288 "Skiff" missiles on the Deltas 5 each, which is purely conjectural but will be used below for its arithmetical convenience.

The permitted total of warheads after completion of START-2 (1 January 2003) is "between 1700 and 1750," requiring elimination of between 410 and 460 warheads from the 1999 total. There are several possible ways to achieve this reduction, and the conjectural assumption stated in the previous paragraph will be used to illustrate the options.

| | | Retained post-2003 force | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Option | Scrapping | Submarines | Missiles | Warheads |
| One | 1 Typhoon<br>4 Delta | 19 | 324 | 1720 |
| Two | 2 Typhoon<br>2 Delta | 20 | 336 | 1760 |
| Three | 3 Typhoon<br>1 Delta | 20 | 332 | 1720 |
| Four | 4 Typhoon | 20 | 328 | 1680 |
| Five | 5 Delta | 19 | 328 | 1760 |
| Six | 6 Delta | 18 | 312 | 1680 |

Of the above six options, two bring the retained warheads within the permitted range. The other four fall only slightly outside the limits, and can be brought within them by adding one warhead to, or removing one from, a small proportion of missiles, without requiring any missile to carry more than six warheads. The number of submarines retained is between 18 and 20; the lowest number would comprise boats already in service or under construction (6 Typhoon, 12 Delta IV), the higher figures require either one or two Delta IIIs to be retained or (more likely) an additional one or two Delta IVs to be built in 1996-7. On an assumed thirty-year life, no retained boat will need replacement until 2014 (options 4,5,6) 2015 (options 1 & 3) or 2016 (option 2).

Russian ratification of START-2 depends on the outcome of the elections to replace the dissolved Parliament. Some parliamentarians and generals have opposed ratification on the grounds that the United States will retain more warheads than Russia (8500 versus 8000), but the reduction in overall US numbers makes the Russian deterrent safer than it was against a US surprise attack, and the Russian General Staff therefore favours ratification, especially since the reductions fall heavily on older systems, which are difficult and expensive to maintain. The alternative to START-2 is to leave the United States unrestrained in the strategic nuclear weapons field, so the probability is that Russia will ratify the agreement; in the meantime Admiral Gromov's remarks on the number of SLBM boats to be retained

imply an intention to proceed with reductions to START-2 levels even ahead of formal ratification.

This means that there is no future beyond 1999 for the 36 submarines of classes Delta I-III, including the 18 boats based in the Russian Far East, so it is now appropriate to consider the implications of these reductions for the Pacific Fleet, and in particular for its units based in Kamchatka and the Sea of Okhotsk.

In 1992 there were six bases, four in the north and two in the east, for the 61 SLBM boats (6 Typhoon, 43 Delta, 12 Yankee). Clearly the post-2002 force of 18-20 boats will not need this many bases. One in the Murmansk area houses the six Typhoons and nothing else; it presumably will be retained. Another, about halfway between Murmansk and Archangel, houses only nine Delta Is, and will probably be closed. The fate of the other four bases hinges on decisions probably not yet taken, whether to concentrate the entire force in the north or continue to maintain part of it in the east, and if the latter, whether to keep them at Petropavlovsk or move them to Vladivostok. Factors to be considered include

1. Strategic dispersion. In general terms the more dispersed the Russian strategic nuclear forces are, the less likely the USA is to be tempted to essay a surprise disarming attack on them. However, cuts under START-2 will reduce the forces the USA could use for such an attack, the submarines constitute individual targets whenever at sea, irrespective of where they are based, and in terms of strategic nuclear attack the difference between one target and two is negligible.

2. Cost. Three of the four northern bases are in the vicinity of Murmansk, in an area which would be heavily defended by land, air and sea even if the SLBM boats were not there, because it contains the Northern Fleet headquarters and main base; so little or no additional cost is incurred in defending the submarine bases (the fourth northern base, as already mentioned, will probably be closed). Vladivostok is also heavily defended because it is a Fleet headquarters and main base, so the SLBM boats there do not increase the cost of defending it. This is not the case with Petropavlovsk. Until the SLBM boats were placed there it was a relatively unimportant secondary base for light forces, and the Sea of Okhotsk was so insignificant strategically that from 1963 to 1978 the Kurile Islands lacked even token garrisons.

3. Force maintenance. SLBM boats based at Petropavlovsk have to go to Vladivostok for repairs, and for major overhauls or to change its missiles must return to Severodvinsk, near Murmansk.[44] The Russian Navy, now forced to be cost-conscious, could well conclude from this that (1) if any SLBM are to be kept in the Pacific after 2002, they should replace the Delta Is at Vladivostok, not the Delta IIIs at Petropavlovsk, and (2) to base the entire SLBM force in the Murmansk area would be still more cost-effective.

4. Living conditions. The Russian armed forces are moving to increase their long-term professional cadre, and the Navy, as the most capital-

intensive service, needs a particularly high percentage of such personnel. This means a growing proportion of servicemen with families, to whom amenities (including schools) are important. Murmansk is no Riviera, but its amenities are superior to those of Petropavlovsk (a posting sought in the Soviet period only for additional pay, counting of service there as double for calculation of seniority and pension rights, and privileged access to consumer durables), and its climate no more severe. The same is true of Vladivostok, with the addition of a superior climate.

5. Relationship of resources to commitments. As already mentioned, the Pacific Fleet has been reduced to about half its 1990 size. Its prime commitment remains to control the waters adjacent to the Russian Far East, but the decline in its resources requires selectivity in how it discharges that task. The vast majority of the population, industry and infrastructure of the Russian Far East is in its southern part, and so are almost all the potential threats to them. From this angle, maintenance of a large part of the Fleet north of Japan is a vexatious diversion, especially as the contingency which prompted the northern deployment – protection of part of the strategic deterrent against US attack – is now considered of extremely low probability.

6. The changed world situation. Armed forces of the industrial powers are now being reoriented from global war tasks to crisis management in regional conflicts. The sea areas likely to require such management in the north and west Pacific are around the Korean peninsula and various disputed islands in the South China Sea, and if Russia is to play a role, it will do so from Vladivostok, not Kamchatka.

7. Army domination of decision-making. The Army has always dominated the Russian and Soviet defence establishment, and continues to do so.[45] Within the very limited defence budget an army-dominated establishment is likely to welcome anything that frees funds for the army's needs. Abandonment of the Sea of Okhotsk SLBM "sanctuary" would do just that, by enabling the Petropavlovsk base and attendant Army, Air and Air Defence Force commitments to be scaled down.

8. Naval opinion. The Sea of Okhotsk is of little direct interest to the Navy. Apart from the defence of Sakhalin and the mainland coast (which involves light but hard-hitting units such as the "Nanuchka" missile corvettes, and shore-based naval aircraft), its heavy commitment there is dictated by the SLBM boats, which it mans and operates but does not control (that is the function of the CIS Strategic Deterrent Force headquarters), and which are not designed for a naval task (i.e. to fight other navies). The START-2 Treaty is too recently signed for its implications to have been grasped by the naval profession as a whole (though its head, Admiral Gromov, is clearly well aware of them). Once they are, it will probably be found that a substantial proportion of senior officers will welcome a redeployment that not only returns them to the pleasures of Vladivostok but also enables the Navy to concentrate on more purely naval tasks.

The five-stage plan for solving the Northern Territories dispute, put forward by Yeltsin in 1990, envisages demilitarisation of the disputed islands by 1995, but postponing a political solution for fifteen or twenty years, i.e. to the period around 2005. It is highly unlikely that the proposal was made with either START-2 or the life-span of the Delta class submarines in mind, but it fits well with both, START-2 to be fully implemented by the end of 2002, and the wearing out of Deltas I-III from 2002 to 2012. If Yeltsin's timetable is followed, the negotiations to determine the future status of the Northern Territories will take place after most of the strictly military arguments for retaining any of them will have lost the weight they now have. However, residual arguments based on the needs of conventional defence of the northern part of the Soviet Far East will be put forward by active and retired military conservatives, and by resurgent para-military bodies such as the Cossackry. Some of these arguments will be based on misinterpretation (wilful or otherwise) of the historical record and by raising nightmares such as the revival of Japanese militarism, and will not suffer from excessive rationality. Rather than deny or play down the militarist expansionist phase of Japanese history, it should be emphasised that Japan possessed the entire Kuriles chain throughout its most acute phase, but posed no threat to the Russian or Soviet Far East from them. With that, restriction on use of Japanese waters for entry into the Sea of Okhotsk by warships of non-riparian states (which would require US involvement, as the only non-riparian country likely to want to send warships there), permission for Russia to retain means of surveillance, and binding commitments not to remilitarise the islands, the military arguments against their return could be (and most importantly, be seen to be) undercut.

Solution of the political and economic obstacles to return of the territories after implementation of START-2 will depend basically upon the preservation and deepening of detente. This in turn depends to some extent upon the survival of democracy in Russia. But the connection is far from absolute. With so much of the country already "lost" through secession, and with little about what remains to take pride in except its size, public opinion, no longer as easy to ignore or manipulate as in the past, would be hostile to ceding more, even without chauvinistic outpourings from some political figures; so removal of the main grounds for military objections does not automatically guarantee a settlement that will satisfy Japan.

However, the power struggle between Parliament and Presidency looks likely to reinstate an element of self-perpetuating oligarchy, the form of government most familiar to present-day Russians. Whatever form of government emerges from the current power struggle, its preoccupation will be to solve the current economic and social crises. It cannot do this by reanimating policies which militarily put Russia into an arms race with the world's richest countries, and economically marginalised it on world markets by creating and perpetuating uncompetitive industries, particularly now the other former Soviet Republics are no longer captive markets, nor Eastern

Europe quasi-captive. Necessity makes the survival of detente more sure than that of Yeltsin or democracy.

The implication for the Northern Territories issue is that when the Sea of Okhotsk "sanctuary" no longer exists, from, say, 2003, the prospects of a satisfactory settlement will depend on the then Russian government's perception of the politico-economic advantages and disadvantages to itself of returning versus retaining the Territories, not on what kind of government it is. A strong central government, presiding over a resurgent economy and confident of its ability to handle dissent in a moderately united nation, will be more likely to think concessions possible than a weak government, lacking confidence in its chances of overcoming opposition from hyperpatriots in Moscow or the Cossackry, or satraps in Khabarovsk, Vladivostok or Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. It is preferable that the government in Moscow should be both strong and democratic. But the prospects for a settlement depend more on its strength than its nature, and perhaps it is not too cynical to note that self-perpetuating oligarchies, while frowned on by democratic theory, are far from uncommon in democratic practice.

* * *

Yeltsin's twice-postponed visit finally took place in October 1993, and among its results was a promise of rapid demilitarisation of the Northern Territories. This probably made a virtue out of a necessity, because the ease with which conscript service can now be avoided, the departure of non-Russian officers to join their own countries' armed forces, and the financial constraints on recruitment of non-officer professionals have made it very difficult to man remote garrisons.[46] Nevertheless, if strategic considerations were predominant the undertaking could not have been given. The fact that it was, and subsequent reports of increased Japanese economic aid shipments to the Territories, point to implementation of something resembling the second and third states of Yeltsin's five-stage plan of 1990, although the plan was not specifically mentioned in connection with the visit.

However, it was not specified whether "demilitarisation" includes the sonar and radar operators, or relates only to combat units. And Prime Minister Hosokawa may prove to have been over-optimistic in interpreting Yeltsin's statement that Russia would honour all treaties the Soviet Union had signed with Japan as including the 1956 joint declaration of readiness to return the Habomais and Shikotan. This was not a treaty, but an intended consequence of a treaty which thirty-seven years later has still to be negotiated. Only the course of the actual negotiations will clarify these matters. However, Yeltsin's apology for Soviet mistreatment of Japanese prisoners of war captured in 1945, and the frequent references to the need for "expanded cooperation" of Russo-Japanese relations indicate a modification of past attitudes on both sides. Like other potential foreign investors, Japanese businesses have been reluctant to become heavily involved in Russia's

economic development because of the chaotic nature of Russian legislation and the unresolved power struggle between Presidency and Parliament. If the December election resolves the constitutional problems, the greater resultant stability and perceived need to stimulate the Japanese economy could complement the reduction in importance for the strategic factor to provide the "psychological rapprochement" mentioned by Yeltsin as likely to lead to resolution of the dispute.

## Notes

1 Treaty of Commerce, Navigation and Delimitation between Japan and Russia, January (1855), Article 2.
2 Russo-Japanese Treaty, May (1875), Articles 1 and 2.
3 The figures are given in an article on WW II US aid in *Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Anthology),* Nos. 5-6 (1992).
4 "Comrade J. V. Stalin's Address to the People on the subject of Japan's Capitulation, 2 Sep. 1945," carried in Soviet newspapers 4 Sep., 1945.
5 Marshal Yazov, then Soviet Defence Minister, in interview to *Mainichi Shimbun,* 10 April (1991).
6 Derek da Cunha, *Soviet Naval Power in the Pacific* (USA: Lynne Rienner, 1991).
7 Graham Allison, Hiroshi Kimura, Konstantin Sarkisov (co-directors) *Beyond Cold War to Trilateral Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region. Scenarios for New Relations between Japan, Russia and the United States,* Two volumes (1) Report and Appendices A-E. (2) Appendices F-N, (Cambridge, Mass.: Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, Harvard University, 1992). Hereafter cited as *Beyond Cold War...*
8 Rear-Admiral V. Virkovskii, "Russia and the Kuriles" *Morskoi Sbornik,* No. 3 (1992), pp. 7-11.
9 Major/General G. Melthov, "Military Aspects of the Territorial Problem" *Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star),* 22 July (1992), p. 3.
10 Description of facilities at Petropavlovsk and in the Kuriles taken from da Cunha, *op. cit.,* pp. 59-90 passim.
11 *Beyond Cold War...,* Vol. 2, Appendix L, General Batenin's paper, p. 5.
12 The magnitude of these problems was illustrated by the dismissal in March 1993 of several senior Pacific Fleet officers, among them the Head of Medical Services, and severe reprimanding of others, including the Fleet Commander and Head of logistics, following disclosures of illness brought on by malnutrition and brutal training, affecting 2000 recruits (4 of whom died) at a depot near Vladivostok. *Japan Times,* 9 March (1993), p. 20. Difficulties in maintaining force numbers are shown by statements that only 20% of those liable reported for the autumn 1992 call-up, and that only 13,500 of 100,000 vacancies for contract service were filled in 1992. *Newsweek,* 1 March (1993), p. 31.

13 *Red Star,* 6 Feb (1992), p. 3; 2 June (1992), p. 3; 23 June (1992), p. 2, interview by Russian Defence Minister Grachev in *Armiia (Armed Forces),* Nos. 11-12 (1992).
14 Memorandum of Dulles-Shigemitsu conversation in London, 19 August (1956). Extract in *Beyond Cold War...,* Vol. 1, p. 109, Document 44.
15 His fear was not that Finland itself would attack, but that it might provide a bridgehead for a larger enemy (sometimes seen as Germany, sometimes as Britain and France); temporarily assured of German neutrality by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, he fabricated an incident and attacked Finland, achieving his territorial objectives, but encouraging German ambitions by exposing the Red Army as poorly trained and badly led, and ensuring that when Germany did attack, Finland would indeed serve as a German bridgehead, and, more, would itself attack to recover its lost territories. For full discussion see M. I. Semiryaga, *Tayny Stalinskoi Diplomatii 1939-41 (Secrets of Stalinist Diplomacy 1939-41)*(Moscow: Vysshaya Shkola, 1992), pp. 141-204.
16 *Mainichi Shimbun,* 10 April (1991).
17 Transcript of hearing published in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta,* 26 Aug. (1992), p. 2.
18 In fact the large majority of Pacific Fleet warships with long-range anti-ship attack capacity are already stationed outside the Sea of Japan. da Cunha, *op. cit.,* p. 67.
19 Personal observation. On 28 Feb. (1993), nearing end of mildest winter for seven years, and with thawing already well advanced, floes less than 1 nm offshore at Abashiri well over 1 metre thick.
20 In particular by the maps for November to March in the map series "Water Temperature at the Surface" for each month of the year, in the marine atlas "Atlas Okeanov: Tom I - Tikhii Okean" (Atlas of the Oceans, Vol I, the Pacific Ocean), compiled by the Directorate of Navigation and Oceanography of the Soviet Navy, and published by Voyenizdat (Ministry of Defence Publishing House), Moscow, (1974), pp. 128-139.
21 E.g. in a map of the USSR and adjacent waters published by the UK Ministry of Defence, based on 1927-60 data, Series 5104- Edition 3-GSGS (London: Ordnance Survey, 1964).
22 *Beyond Cold War...,* Vol. 2, Appendix L (Professor Nishihara's paper), p. 10.
23 da Cunha, *op. cit.,* p. 90.
24 *Ibid,* p. 73.
25 M. S. Gorbachev, speech in Vladivostok 28 July (1986).
26 For example American U2 reconnaissance aircraft regularly overflew the Soviet Union from 1956, but the Soviet government did not publicise the violations of its airspace until it succeeded in shooting one down on 1 May 1960.

27 Vice-Admiral Yerofeyev, then newly-appointed to command the Northern Fleet, claimed that in December 1991-January 1992 a Soviet nuclear submarine had tracked a US SLBM boat for five days, and broken off only on General Staff orders, the prominence he accorded the claim suggesting it was an unusual feat. US SLBM boats began regular patrols in the Northern Fleet area in 1961, so had been there for 31 years... *Red Star,* 3 Jun (1992), pp. 1-2.

28 Nishihara, loc. cit. in *Beyond Cold War...,* p. 11.

29 Batenin, loc. cit. in *Beyond Cold War...,* p. 5.

30 Data on dispersal taken from da Cunha, *op. cit.,* p. 75.

31 *Morskoi Sbornik,* No. 7 (1992), pp. 61-62. According to US sources the Soviet Navy wrote off over 400 ships in 1987-91. *Red Star,* 8 July (1992).

32 da Cunha, *op. cit.,* p. 13.

33 *Morskoi Sbornik,* No. 7 (1992), pp. 61-62.

34 *Morskoi Sbornik,* Nos. 8-9 (1992), pp. 10-11.

35 *Morskoi Sbornik,* No. 7 (1992), p. 7.

36 *Ibid.*

37 *Morskoi Sbornik,* Nos. 8-9 (1992), pp. 3-4.

38 *Morskoi Sbornik,* No. 3(1992), pp. 53-56.

39 Russian naval planners cannot at present take even that for granted. On 10 August 1942 the German pocket battleship "Admiral Scheer" evaded British and Soviet naval surveillance, and sailed from Narvik in Norway across the White Sea to the Kara Sea. Its presence and location were disclosed when it sank an icebreaker on 25 August and bombarded the Soviet Kara Sea port of Dikson on the 27th, but it returned safely to Narvik in September. The operation ("Wunderland") was not repeated, hut more because of the paucity of worthwhile targets encountered than because of any difficulties in its execution. Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, *Kursom k Pobede (On Course to Victory),* 3rd edition, (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1989), pp. 231-236.

40 Reductions in US bases announced by Defense Secretary Aspin on 12 March 1993 fall especially heavily on the US Navy, which will lose 23 installations, whereas the Air Force will lose 4 and the Army 2. In addition US forces will reduce activities at or relinquish 29 overseas installations. Some facilities on the northern US Pacific coast will be expanded, probably because of perceived regional conflicts in Pacific and Indian Ocean areas. The goal of a 600-ship US Navy pursued under President Reagan was abandoned by President Bush, and the 1999 figure is more likely to be around 350, less of a reduction than the former Soviet Navy is undergoing, but nevertheless a substantial cut in the threats Russian naval planning must try to counter. *Japan Times,* 14 March (1993), p. 6.

41 Michael MccGwire of the Brookings Institution suggests that the entire military program which led to the overall build-up during the 1970's was approved by the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee Plenum in

December 1966. The process may not have been as neat as that suggestion implies, because given a cycle of about ten years between the genesis of a Soviet ship design and the appearance of the first ship built to it, the Delta I submarine and the missile (SS-N-8) associated with it would have to date back to about 1962, i.e. two years before the overthrow of Nikita Khrushchev. Similarly the Navy's focus on anti-submarine surface ships, especially important in relation to the "bastion" concept, also predates Brezhnev, and some of the ship designs must have been first evolved in the late 1950's. However, the numbers built and their integration into an overall strategy would certainly depend on decisions taken in the early Brezhnev-Kosygin years, and MccGwire is surely right in dating the acceptance of the military program to this period, though whether the Central Committee did anything more than rubber-stamp a Politburo decision remains to be determined from Party archives.

42 Discussed in more detail in G. Jukes "Russia's Problems and the Russian Military," Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University (Forthcoming).

43 Map in *Morskoi Sbornik,* No. 4 (1992), p. 5.

44 *Ibid.*

45 For example, the first eight appointments (Minister and Deputy Ministers) to the Russian Ministry of Defence established in May 1992 included seven soldiers and one civilian, but nobody from Air Force or Navy.

46 For example, by the autumn of 1992 an infantry battalion stationed in Sakhalin had only 26 non-officer personnel left, 14 of whom were to be released then as their term of conscription had expired. All maintenance and guard duties were being performed by officers. The complement of an infantry battalion varies, but at full strength would normally include at least 500 conscripts. *Armiia,* Nos. 21-22, November (1992), pp. 9-11. On the national level Lieutenant-General Bondartsev, First Deputy Head of Mobilisation, stated in August 1993 that the forces were 700,000 below strength, and would suffer a further shortfall of 170-190,000 in the autumn through excess of releases over call-ups. at 1 January 1994 the Russian armed forces would be at only 30-35% of their authorised strength, and if the law on "alternative service" then under consideration was passed, about 100,000 more potential conscripts would be exempted from military service. *Syn Otechestva,* No. 32 (Moscow, 1993), p. 2.