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## The Kuril Islands Dispute: An Obstacle in Russo-Japanese Relations

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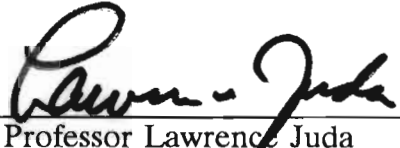
**The Kurile Islands Dispute:  
An Obstacle in Russo-Japanese  
Relations**

by  
Roderick J. Fraser Jr.

*A paper submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Marine Affairs*

University of Rhode Island  
1993

Major Paper  
Master of Marine Affairs

Approved  \_\_\_\_\_  
Professor Lawrence Juda

University of Rhode Island  
1993

## **Acknowledgement**

The support of my wife Angela and my son Matthew has been crucial to the successful completion of this project, and I am extremely grateful.

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**Obstacle in Russo - Japanese Relations**

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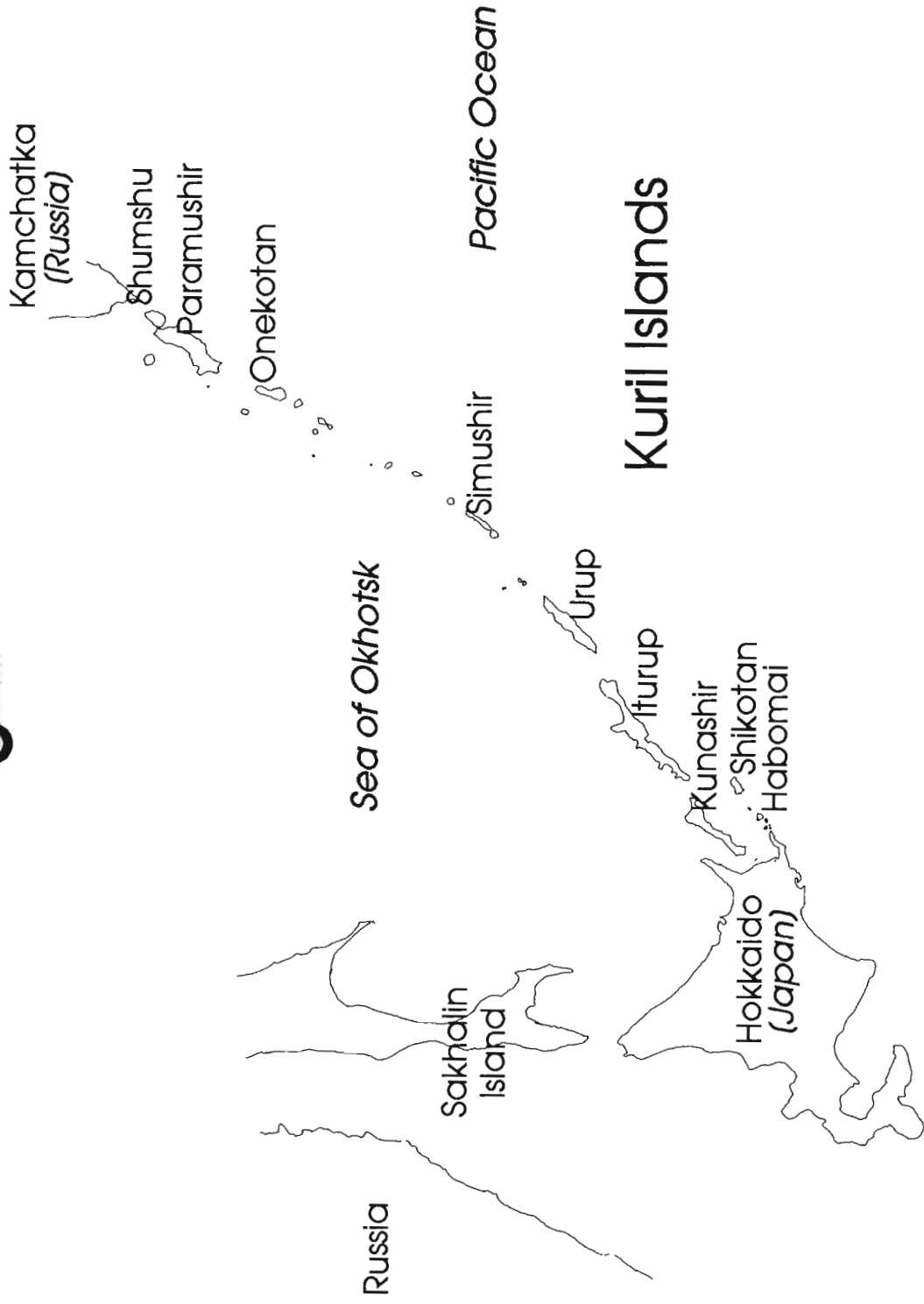
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## **I. Geopolitical Implications**

The controversy between Japan and Russia over the ownership of the Kuril Islands is a significant barrier to improved diplomatic relations in the Far Eastern region. Because of this dispute, Japan and Russia have not yet signed a peace treaty to formally end the second world war and neither side seems willing to make any significant concessions to reach a compromise. The issue of ownership of these islands has been a continuing focal point of Russo-Japanese relations since the two nations first made contact in the late eighteenth century. The various aspects of this dispute are complex and have continued to evolve over time with changes in international law, creeping maritime jurisdiction and the dynamic nature of the breakup of the former Soviet Union. This study analyses the historical and legal facts surrounding the issue of sovereignty and concludes by suggesting how this controversy may be settled.

The Kuril Islands form a 1200 kilometer long chain from Hokkaido Japan to the Kamchatkan peninsula of Russia[Figure 1] and have been an important point of contention in Russo-Japanese relations for over one hundred and fifty years. The land mass of the entire Kuril chain is over seven times larger than the Ryukyu chain which, as part of Japan, extends southward to the Island of Okinawa.<sup>1</sup> The Kurils are a formidable group of thirty six islands and numerous rocky projections with a land area of 15,600 square kilometers. Half of this area

# Figure 1





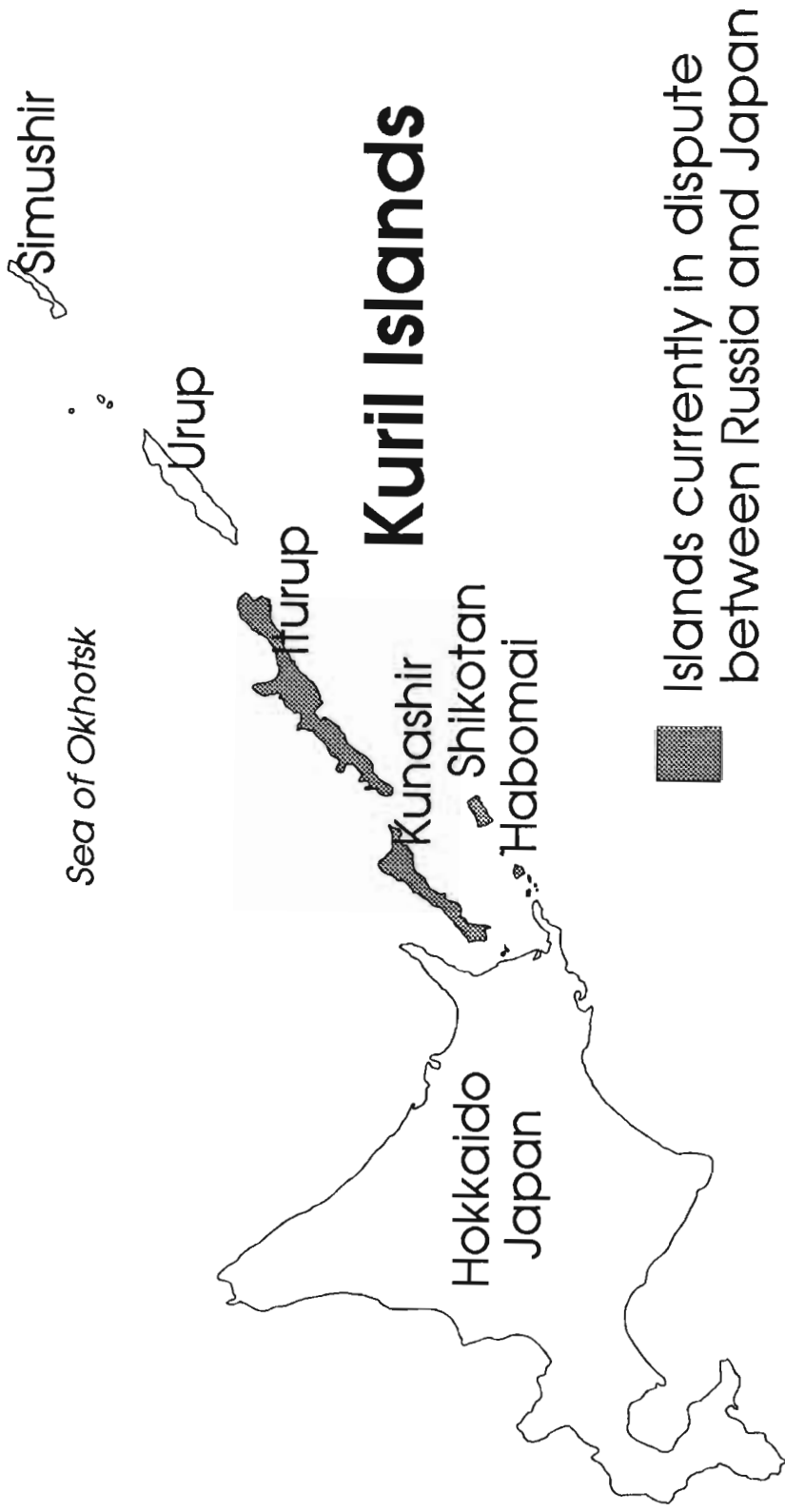
is covered by the four islands Iturup, Paramushir, Kunashir and Urup.<sup>2</sup> Iturup and Kunashir along with Shikotan and the Habomais make up the four islands whose ownership is currently in dispute between Japan and Russia.[Figure 2]

In the seas off the Kuril Islands, warm and cold water currents come together, resulting in an extraordinarily rich and diverse abundance of marine life. Yearly, about 1.5 billion tons of fish are caught in the waters off the Kuriles.<sup>3</sup> In the summer months, the waters around the Kurils are filled with numerous sperm whales which travel there to feed on the water's abundance of squid.<sup>4</sup> Because of this rich diversity of marine life, the exclusive economic zone currently generated by these islands provides a tremendous exploitable resource to the nation which controls them. Catching and processing fish and sea products is the main occupations of the Island's more than 20,000 inhabitants, almost all of whom are Russian.<sup>5</sup>

On the continental shelf of nearby Sakhalin Island, oil and gas resources have been discovered which may indicate the possibility of similar deposits on the continental shelf of the southern Kuriles. The fields discovered off Sakhalin have an estimated 100 million tons of oil and 400 billion cubic meters of gas.<sup>6</sup> The possibility of oil and gas resources is especially attractive to Japan which presently has no domestic oil supply.

The location of these islands poses a natural barrier between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean. This feature makes these islands of great

# Figure 2



strategic importance to Russia whose Pacific Naval fleet is homeported in Vladivostok on the Sea of Japan. The significance of these islands as the "key to communications between the Pacific and Russia's Far East" has been recognized by Russia since the 1880's when Russian Admiral Stepan Makarov surveyed the islands.<sup>7</sup> The only other routes to the Pacific from Vladivostok are through the Tsushima Straits between Japan and South Korea or the Tsugaru Strait between the Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido.

During the past two centuries, the Kurils have played a central role in negotiations and conflicts over territorial boundaries and imperial expansion between Japan and Russia in the Far East. These conflicts have resulted in a series of treaties (the Treaty of Shimoda-1855 and the Treaty of St. Petersburg-1875) that have transferred ownership of the islands between the two nations. The competition for territorial and economic gains and the conflicting militant expansionism between the two countries has also resulted in armed conflict. Russian - Japanese competition for control of Manchuria and Korea resulted in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 which proved to be a costly undertaking for Tsar Nicholas II. During the Bolshevik Revolution, Japan dispatched a large number of troops to the Russian Maritime Province (Primorski Krai), occupying Vladivostok and other cities until 1922 when Japan extended formal recognition to the Soviet Government in signing the Peking Convention in that year. Tensions continued to run high between the two nations until 1940 when a neutrality pact

was signed, which was to last for five years.

In August of 1945, the U.S.S.R. seized the Kuril Islands after Japan's formal surrender and have occupied the Kurils until the present.<sup>8</sup> The issue of ownership of these islands remains the single deterrent to the signing of a peace treaty between Russia and Japan. Japan signed a peace treaty in 1951 with all of the major allied powers except the USSR, which did not participate in the peace negotiations and did not become a party to that treaty. The issue of sovereignty over these islands is of such importance to the Japanese that in January of 1981, the ruling cabinet proclaimed seven February as "the Day of the Northern Territories."<sup>9</sup> The Japanese government has continually demanded the return of the Southern Kurils (Kunashir, Iturup, Shikotan & Habomais) as part of any peace treaty with Russia or as a prerequisite for economic aid. Although there have been many ideas put forth on both sides and many days of negotiations, no satisfactory settlement has been reached, (nor is there an end in sight). Presently, the entrenched positions of the Japanese and Russian governments are limiting economic and political cooperation between the two countries. Japan maintains that full economic aid will be forthcoming with a solution to the territorial question. Russia, in turn, contends that there can be no compromise until Japan provides extensive economic and technological aid to show its good will.

The problems posed by this territorial issue become more numerous and complex when viewed in the light of the Third United Nations Conference on the

Law of the Sea and expanding maritime jurisdiction. The sovereignty issue goes beyond the small land area enveloped by these islands to the matter of jurisdiction over the surrounding 12 nautical mile territorial sea and the 200 nm exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The rich fisheries of the region and the discovery of oil and gas deposits nearby in the Sea of Okhotsk makes the EEZ generated by these islands very attractive.

The recent breakup of the former Soviet Union and the new openness of the present Russian government has generated a renewed interest in the issue and new hope by the Japanese that a solution to this complex territorial issue can be decided upon in the very near future.

## II. Historical Background

As to Russian vs. Japanese claims to first discovery of the islands, the majority of researchers of the subject conclude that the Japanese probably discovered them first, though their documented contacts in 1754 only describe the southern islands of Kunashir, Iturup and Urup.<sup>10</sup> In the late sixteenth century, eastward movement of Russian Cossacks across Siberia in search of furs as payment of tribute to the Tsar eventually led to Russian discovery and exploration of the Kuriles.<sup>11</sup> Russian expeditions began to explore the northern and central Kurils in roughly 1711, compiling information on the island's proximity and relationship to Japan. In the years 1738 - 1739, Martin Spanberg, an explorer in the service of Russia, sailed along the Kurils south to the Japanese islands of Hokkaido and Honshu.<sup>12</sup> Shortly after this expedition, approximately 1750, a Russian settlement was established on Shimushu, the northernmost island in the chain. This settlement remained until the islands were ceded to Japan in 1875.<sup>13</sup> Another Russian settlement was established on Urup in 1795, but the extreme weather conditions and lack of food led to the extinction of the colony in 1805.<sup>14</sup>

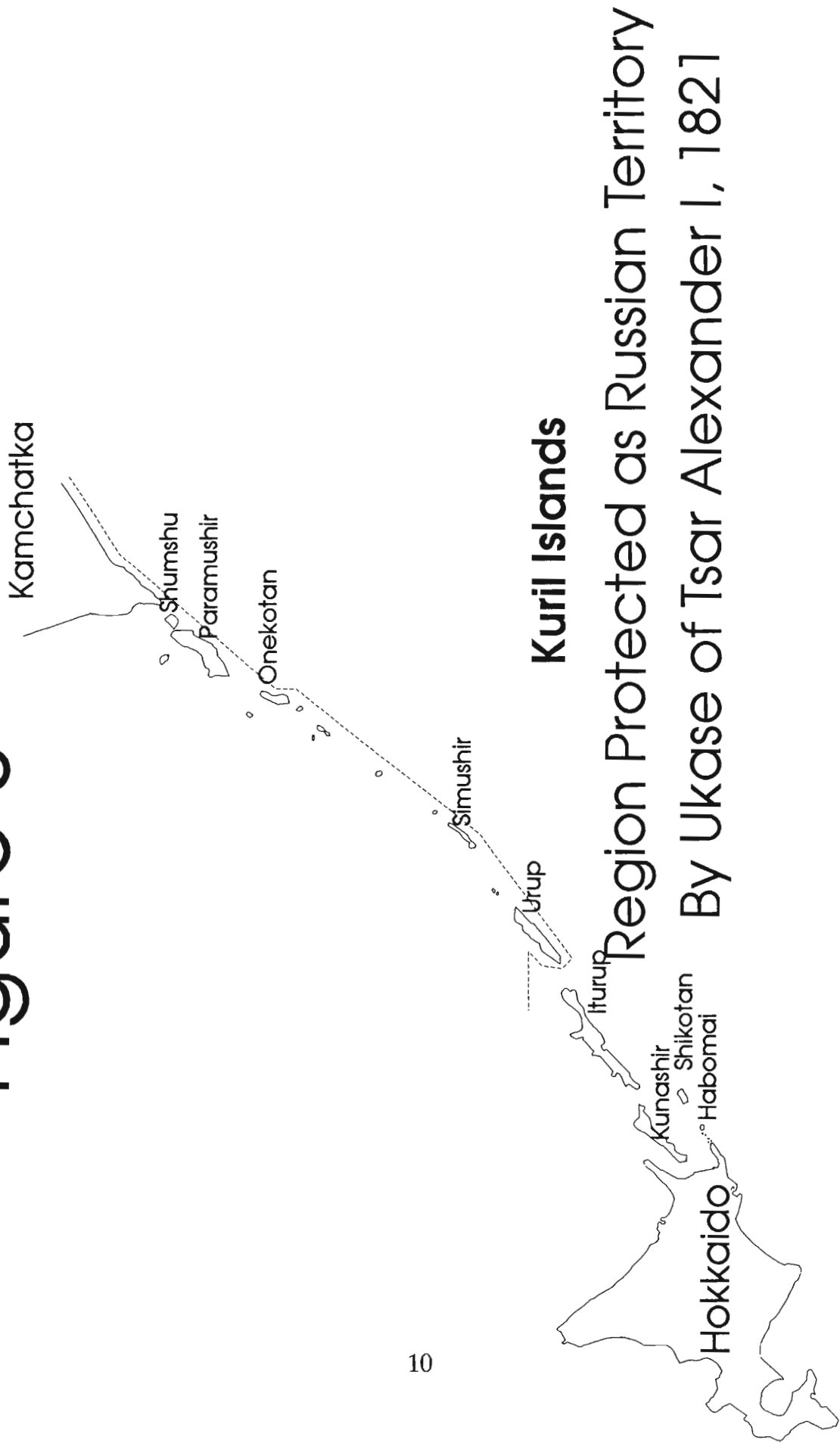
Although it is widely believed in Japan that Murakami Hironori, a retainer of the Lord of Matsumae, visited the southern Kurils in 1635,<sup>15</sup> the first documented Japanese landing on the islands was in 1754 on the southern end of Kunashir where Japanese merchant Hidaya Kyubei established a trading post.<sup>16</sup> Japanese merchants had been trading with the aboriginal population of the

islands, the Ainu, since the sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> The Japanese did not attempt to explore the chain until 1785 when Mogami Tokunai, a surveyor attached to a shogunal mission, tried to investigate the extent of Russian settlements in the chain. Mogami's trek only advanced as far as Urup when the onset of fall forced the suspension of his travail. Mogami returned to Urup again in 1792 but never ventured north to explore the rest of the Kuril chain.<sup>18</sup>

In 1799, the southern Kuril islands of Kunashir and Iturup were placed under the direct control of the shogunal government and positive steps were taken to stabilize a Russo-Japanese frontier. Roads and guard stations were built on the islands to establish a strong Japanese presence and to exert sovereignty.<sup>19</sup> The shogunate retained direct control over the Kurils until 1821 when control was then relinquished to the Lord of Matsumae.<sup>20</sup>

During the early 1800's, the waters around the Kurils were frequented by many foreign fishing and whaling vessels. This development concerned the Tsarist government in Russia and in 1821, Tsar Alexander I issued a ukase to protect Russian interests in the Far East. This edict extended the jurisdiction of the Russian-American Company, a company granted a virtual economic monopoly in the Far East, "along the Kuril Islands from Bhering's Straits to the south cape of Urup, viz. to the 45°50' Northern Latitude"<sup>21</sup>[Fig 3] Foreign ships were barred from approaching Russian coasts and islands that were protected by this decree. The Tsar sent the first permanent Naval squadron to the Pacific in 1822 to

# Figure 3





enforce this policy. By expressly delineating the area under Russian control in 1821 as extending to the south cape of Urup, Russia had excluded Iturup, Kunashir, Shikotan and the Habomais thus tacitly recognizing Japan's claims to these islands.<sup>22</sup>

### **A. The Treaty of Shimoda**

In the 1850's Japan came under pressure from the United States, Great Britain and Russia to open its ports to foreign trade. The expeditions of Commodore Matthew Perry resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Kaganawa between the U.S. and Japan on 31 March 1854 which opened up trade between the two nations at the ports of Shimoda and Hakkodate.<sup>23</sup> Japan then signed an agreement with British Naval forces in Nagasaki on 14 October 1854 which allowed British ships to call on the ports of Nagasaki and Hakkodate for supplies.<sup>24</sup>

During this time, Russian Admiral Evfimii Putiatin had been negotiating with the Japanese government to secure a treaty which would open trade between the two nations. Putiatin bartered unsuccessfully in the summer of 1853 and then again in January of 1854.<sup>25</sup> In November of 1854, Putiatin returned to Japan once again to resume treaty negotiations. While sailing from Osaka Bay to Shimoda, Putiatin's ship was sunk in a storm, temporarily stranding him in Japan. The prior agreements with the U.S. and Great Britain, combined with the

stranding of the Russian negotiators, weakened the Russian position in the treaty negotiations.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, on 7 February 1855 the Treaty of Shimoda was signed between Russia and Japan. The treaty opened up the three ports of Nagasaki, Shimoda and Hakkodate to Russian ships and Russians were given extraterritorial rights in Japan. The treaty also provided a formal boundary in the Kurils separating the two countries [Fig 4]. Article two of the treaty stated:

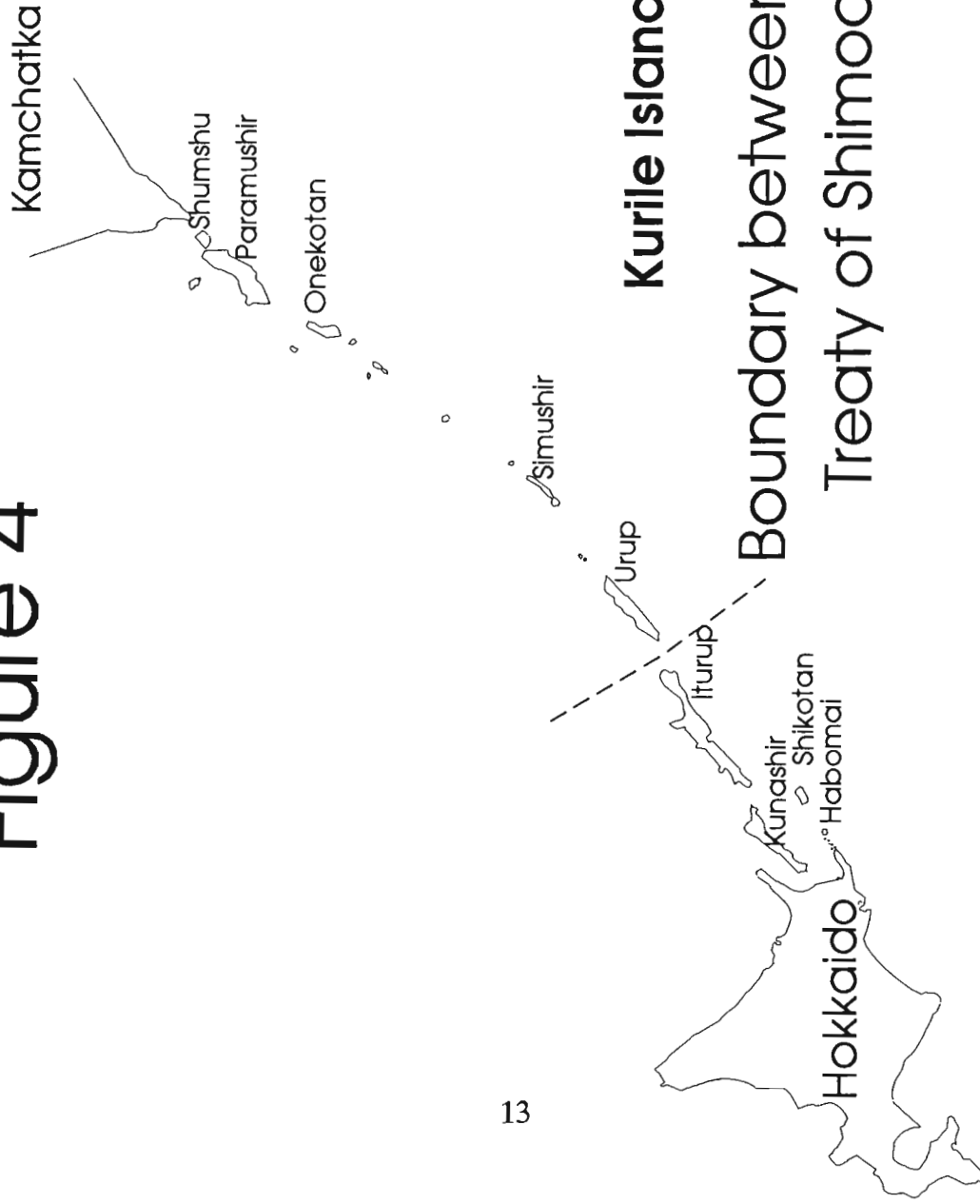
*"Henceforth the boundaries between Russia and Japan will pass between the islands Etorofu[Iturup] and Uruppu[Urup]. The whole island of Etorofu belongs to Japan and the whole island of Uruppu and the other Kuril Islands to the north constitute possessions of Russia. As regards the island Karafuto (Sakhalin), it remains unpartitioned between Russia and Japan, as has been the case up to this time."<sup>27</sup>*

This treaty officially recognized the southern Kurils as Japanese territory and still provides the basis for Japanese claims to these islands. Japanese Premier Kiichi Miyazawa has stated " both sides know" that the 1855 Russo - Japanese treaty which recognized these islands as Japanese territory "was concluded peacefully."<sup>28</sup>

### **B. The Treaty of St. Petersburg**

The Treaty of Shimoda, although settling the frontier in the Kurils, left the question of ownership of Sakhalin Island unanswered. Japan controlled the southern end while Russia controlled the northern end. The Japanese government tried to press its claims to all of Sakhalin in 1862 and 1867 but was

# Figure 4



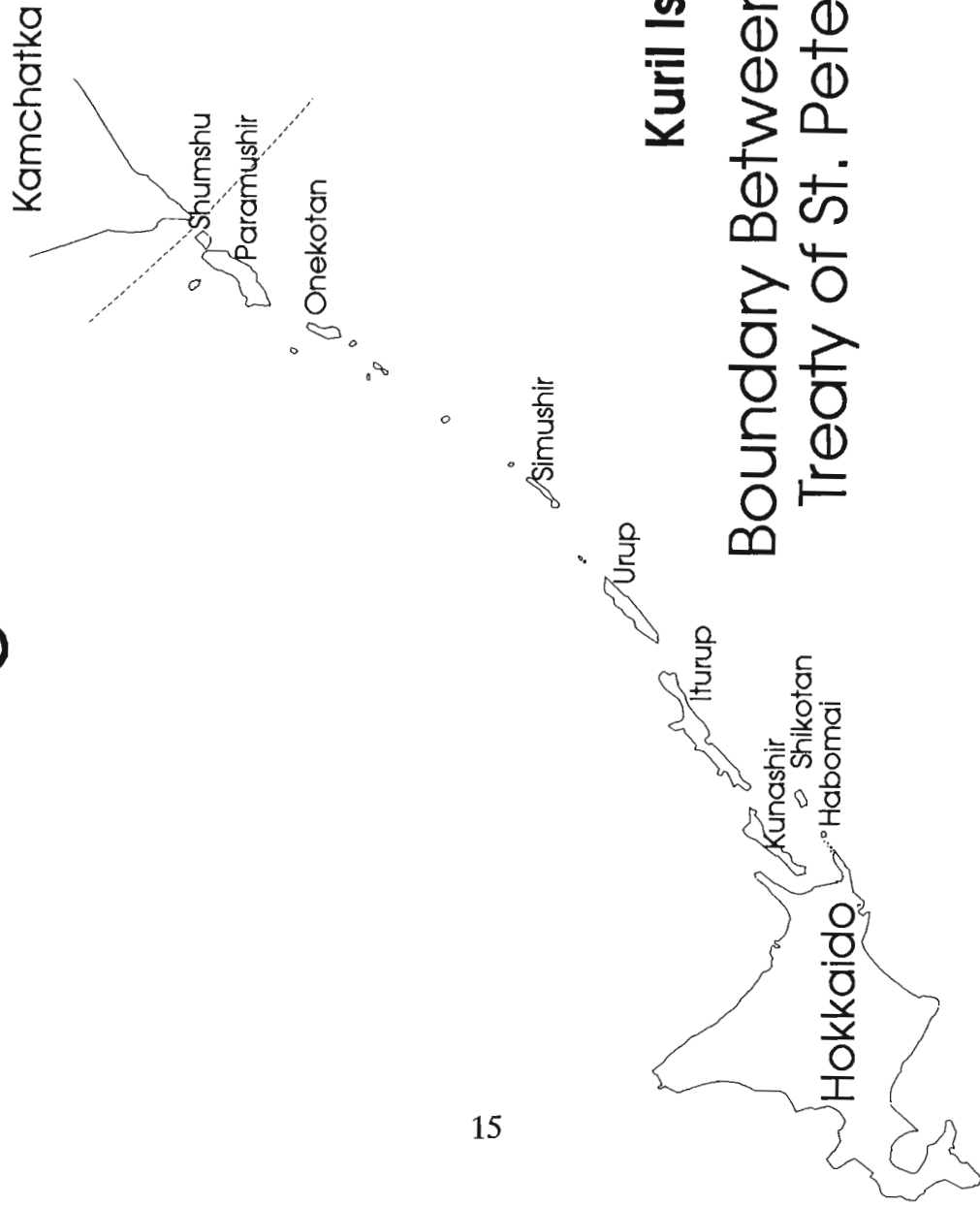
unsuccessful. In 1869-1870, Japan proposed arbitration by the United States with no success. Both countries offered to purchase the other's rights to the island, also to no avail. The Russians attempted to make concessions in the Kurils in order to settle the controversy over Sakhalin and in 1866 offered to concede Urup and three adjacent islands in exchange for Japan relinquishing its rights to Sakhalin.<sup>29</sup>

Mounting domestic pressures and the possibility of heightened disagreement with a more powerful Russia on the Sakhalin issue helped to coerce Tokyo into a position of compromise. Japan decided to exchange its Sakhalin territory for territory in the Kurils [Fig 5]. On 7 May 1875, the Treaty of St. Petersburg was signed between the two nations. Article two of the treaty stated;

*"In exchange for the cession to Russia of the rights on the island of Sakhalin, stipulated in the first article, His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, for himself and His descendants, cedes to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan the group of the Kuril islands which he possesses at present, together with all the rights of sovereignty appertaining to this possession, so that henceforth the said group of Kuril islands shall belong to the Empire of Japan."<sup>30</sup>*

The treaty article further states that "the boundary between the empires of Russia and Japan in these areas shall pass through the strait between Cape Lopatka of the peninsula of Kamchatka and the island of Shimushu."<sup>31</sup> Thus Japan gained all of the Kurils for its half of Sakhalin Island, a trade that both sides felt was better for Russia. After the 1875 treaty, the Japanese government incorporated the Kurils as part of the Japanese homeland by making them part of the domestic

# Figure 5



prefectural system of government. From this time until 1945, the Kurils were governed as Japanese home territory.<sup>32</sup>

### **C. The Russo-Japanese War and the Treaty of Portsmouth**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Japan and Russia had developed a rivalry for dominance in Korea and Manchuria. Japan's war with China in 1894 and Russia's occupation of Manchuria during China's Boxer Rebellion in 1900 brought the two countries to the brink of armed conflict. After much negotiation between the two governments, no clear solution was reached and Japan initiated hostilities with an attack on Port Arthur in February of 1904.<sup>33</sup> A number of land battles in which the Japanese were victorious, the annihilation of the Russian Baltic Fleet in the Straits of Tsushima by Admiral Togo Heihachiro combined with political unrest within Russia forced the Tsarist government to the peace table.

The peace conference, which was mediated by U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, was held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire from Aug. 9 to Sept. 5, 1905.<sup>34</sup> The treaty gave the Japanese some very important concessions in the region including the Southern half of Sakhalin Island (which Japan had ceded to Russia in the Treaty of St. Petersburg), Port Arthur in China and its hinterland, the Russian lease of the South Manchurian Railway and fishing rights along the Russian Coast.<sup>35</sup> Although the Japanese regained the southern portion of Sakhalin Island, no mention of the Kuril islands was made in the peace treaty, nor

did the issue of sovereignty over the islands enter into the negotiations.

#### **D. The Russian Revolution and the Peking Convention**

During the Russian Revolution and civil war, Japan capitalized on the collapse of governmental control and authority in the Far East by landing troops at Vladivostok in 1918 and occupying the northern portion of Sakhalin Island in 1920. Japan continued to occupy these areas until October of 1922. During the four years that they occupied this region, the Japanese exploited the natural resources of the region, exporting raw materials and lumber.<sup>36</sup> Japan did not formally recognize the new Soviet government until 1925 when a treaty normalizing relations between the two nations was signed. "The Convention Between Japan and the Soviet Union" was signed in Peking on 20 January 1925. This treaty established diplomatic and consular rights between the two countries and reinforced the current status of Japan's control over the southern half of Sakhalin Island. Article II of the convention stated that the:

*"U.S.S.R. agrees that the Treaty of Portsmouth of September 5, 1905, shall remain in force"*<sup>37</sup>

In addition to recognizing the Treaty of Portsmouth and normalizing relations, the Japanese were able to prey upon the Soviet Union's relative weakness in order to gain provisions in this convention that gave Japan lucrative development rights to oil, coal, access to fisheries and other resources in the Russian Far East.

The 1930's experienced a heightened level of political tension between

Japan and the Soviet Union. Japan continued in the role of militant expansionist occupying Manchuria, while the Soviets instituted a buildup of military power in the Far East to thwart any possible Japanese aggression. During this time there was a series of military clashes between Soviet and Japanese forces on the Soviet-Manchurian border culminating in a full scale battle in May-September 1939.<sup>38</sup> Both nations were suspicious of the other's intentions and regarded the other as a possible major adversary in the future.

#### **E. The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Act**

In August of 1940, the Japanese government began building up troop levels in the Kurils stationing men on Shimushu, Urup, Iturup, Matua and Onnekotan. The Japanese did not desire direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, but sought to negate any possible Soviet interference with their expansionist objectives through negotiation. Tokyo appointed a new ambassador to the Kremlin in September of 1940 to aid in acquiring a Soviet-Japanese agreement. Soviet Foreign Affairs Commissar Molotov quickly made it known to him that the U.S.S.R. would like to have the Kuril Islands in exchange for a non-aggression pact. Molotov stated that a non-aggression pact with Japan could not be completed without "the reversion of territory lost in the Far East, namely South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands."<sup>39</sup> The Soviets however, did not expect the Japanese to agree to these terms so they then proposed that Japan give up its oil



and coal rights that it had acquired in the Peking Convention of 1925.

Finally, on 13 April 1941, the Soviet Union and Japan signed a neutrality pact that was to remain in effect for five years. The pact contained no territorial exchanges or mention of Japanese oil and gas concessions. The Japanese informed Molotov via separate correspondence that the issue of oil and gas concessions would be handled within a few months.<sup>40</sup>

### III. World War II and the Kurils:

#### A. The Cairo Declaration

Having signed a neutrality pact with the USSR, Japan was free to turn its attention to other objectives in the Pacific. The Kurils would play a crucial role in Japanese war strategy and planning. The Japanese military had developed an operational plan for a possible attack on the Soviet Far East using the Kurils as a springboard. The plan relied on the assumption that Soviet troops in the region would be transferred to the German front leaving the Far East vulnerable to Japanese conquest. After much consideration, the Japanese Army High Command decided not to attack the Soviets at this point in the war.<sup>41</sup>

The Kurils did play an important role, however, in the Japanese strategy against the United States. Hitokappu bay on the Island of Iturup was used as the staging area for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor Dec 7, 1941<sup>42</sup> and again in June of 1942, to prepare for the invasion of the Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska.<sup>43</sup> The U.S., having been drawn into the Pacific war along with Great Britain and China, joined these nations in a formal alliance against the Japanese. In 1943, the leaders of these three nations met in Cairo, Egypt to discuss common goals in the war against Japan. The Cairo declaration was signed by the U.S., Great Britain and China on 27 November 1943, stating:

*"The three Great Allies are fighting this war to restrain and punish the aggression of Japan. They covet no gains for themselves and have no thought of territorial expansion. It is their purpose that Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or*

*occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914, and that all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China. Japan will also be expelled from all the other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. The aforesaid three powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.*"<sup>44</sup>

The Soviet Union was not represented at this meeting, nor was it a signatory to the declaration. The Kurils would not fall into the declaration's category of "islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War" since these islands were peacefully ceded to the Japanese by the Treaty of St. Petersburg in 1875. Neither could they be categorized as "all the other territories which she has take by violence and greed" since, as stated, they were peacefully ceded for Russian rights to the southern half of Sakhalin Island. The seizure of the entire Kuril chain was however, part of the Soviet Union's strategy long before their entry into the Pacific war. Stalin wanted South Sakhalin Island and the Kurils so that the Soviet Union could exercise control over the straits leading to Siberia and the Sea of Okhotsk.<sup>45</sup>

As Japanese military losses mounted in 1944, the government of General Tojo resigned and was replaced by a new government that favored beginning negotiations with the allies using the Soviet Union as an intermediary. Mamoru Shigemitsu, the Japanese foreign minister, prepared a paper, "Diplomatic Measures to be Taken vis-a-vis the Soviet Union" which delineated possible concessions to the Soviet Union. This paper outlined, *inter-alia*, transfer to the

USSR titles to South Sakhalin and the northern and central Kurils and the cession of Japanese fishing rights in Soviet Far Eastern waters.<sup>46</sup> The southern Kurils were not included as a possible concession to the Soviets as it was felt that the southern Kurils were strategically too important to Japan. Rear Admiral Sokichi Takagi, a member of the Japanese ministerial secretariat of the naval general staff conducted a secret study on possible negotiating terms. He concluded that the Kurils were the empire's "first line of defense against aggression from the north and west." He further found that it would be very difficult to convince the ruling elite to make all of the concessions put forth in the Shigemitsu paper, and if Korea and the Kurils were also included, "the elite's reluctance might be fanned into so stubborn a resistance that the negotiations would be sabotaged before they were even begun." Japan's expectations of a Soviet brokered end to the war began to dwindle in November of 1944 when Stalin denounced Japan as an aggressor nation during a speech on the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>47</sup>

### **B. The Blakeslee memorandum**

On 28 December 1944, Professor George H. Blakeslee of Clark University, working for the State Department's Division of Territorial Studies produced a secret memorandum on the Kurils; "Japan: Territorial Problems: The Kuril Islands." Professor Blakeslee observed that "the Kuril Islands have strategic

importance for Japan, the Soviet Union and the United States." Blakeslee's memo supported Japanese claims to the southern Kurils by stating "Japan has a strong claim to the southern group of the Kurils on the basis of nationality, self-determination, geographic propinquity, economic need and historic possession." Although Blakeslee supported Japanese claims to the southern Kurils, on the subject of possible Soviet claims to the chain he wrote:

*"The Soviet Union has a substantial claim to the northern group, Shimushu, Paramushiro and Araitto, on the grounds of propinquity and the consequent desirability of controlling these islands to prevent them from becoming a military menace if in the possession of a hostile power.*

*The Soviet government may ask not only for the northern islands, but also for the central and possibly even for the southern group. Possession of the northern and central islands would give the Soviet Union control of passages into the Okhotsk Sea which are practically ice-free throughout the year. There would seem, however, to be few factors which would justify a Soviet claim to the southern islands; this transfer to the Soviet Union would create a situation which a future Japan would find difficult to accept as a permanent solution."<sup>48</sup>*

Blakeslee concluded his memorandum with three recommendations:

- "1. The Southern Kurils should be retained by Japan subject to the principles of disarmament to be applied to the entire Japanese empire.*
- 2. The northern and central Kurils should be placed under the projected international organization which should designate the Soviet Union as administering authority, and*
- 3. in any case, the retention by Japan of fishing rights in the waters of the northern group should be given consideration."<sup>49</sup>*

It is widely believed that for reasons unknown, President Roosevelt did not read the Blakeslee Memorandum since it has been noted that he thought that

Southern Sakhalin *and the Kurils* had been awarded to Japan under the Portsmouth treaty which ended the Russo-Japanese War. Based on this belief, Roosevelt felt that the Kurils could be returned to the Soviets under the auspices of the Cairo Declaration.<sup>50</sup> The President further commented on the Soviet desire to acquire the Kurils by stating in December of 1944, "there would be no difficulty whatsoever in regard to the southern half of Sakhalin and the Kuril islands going to Russia at the end of the war."<sup>51</sup>

### **C. The Yalta Conference**

The U.S. military was initially very interested in the strategic importance of the Kurils as a base for naval and air operations and as the gateway to the Sea of Okhotsk. U.S. military planners reported in January of 1945 that in order to open a sea route to the Sea of Okhotsk, "it is necessary to secure control of one of the northern Kuril straits", but further stated that an operation of this sort would be difficult and costly due to a lack of nearby resources and adverse weather conditions.<sup>52</sup> Although the United States joint staff planners considered the North Pacific to have "enormous strategic importance" and stressed the Soviet Union's "traditional interest in the region and the uncertainty of the pattern of future relationships," the decision was eventually made to concentrate operations in the central Pacific where it was thought that operational plans would be more successful.<sup>53</sup>

During the Yalta conference, President Roosevelt conducted personal discussions with Marshal Stalin about Russia's entry into the war against Japan. Stalin made it clear to Roosevelt that without some territorial concessions as a basis to justify involvement, the Soviet people might oppose a war with Japan, which had not been an aggressor against the USSR. Following these discussions, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill signed an agreement on 11 February that stated in part:

*"The leaders of the three Great Powers- the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain- have agreed that in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe has terminated, the Soviet Union shall enter into the war against Japan on the side of the Allies on condition that:*

*2. The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, viz.:*

*(a) the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union,...*

*3. The Kuril Islands shall be handed over to the Soviet Union... The Heads of the three Great Powers have agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated..."<sup>54</sup>*

This agreement and the territorial concessions therein were kept secret until 1946.

Before his death in late April of 1945, Roosevelt was informed that Stalin also expected the USSR to share in the occupation of Japan and desired an agreement with the U.S. and Great Britain that delineated zones of occupation.<sup>55</sup> The Soviet government solidified its position against Japan on 5 April 1945 when it notified Japan that it was terminating the Neutrality Treaty of 1941. After the death of President Roosevelt and upon his ascent to the Presidency, President

Truman confirmed the terms of the Yalta agreement to Stalin. At this point, however, Soviet entry into the war against Japan was not needed.<sup>56</sup>

In May of 1945, the Japanese government increased its overtures to the Soviet government in order to enlist its aid in mediating a settlement to the war. In July, Molotov was informed by the Japanese ambassador in Moscow that the emperor wished to end the war and would send Prince Konoye to Moscow as a special envoy. The prince had a draft proposal that relinquished Japan's colonies, Okinawa, south Sakhalin and the northern and central Kurils to the USSR. The southern Kurils were not part of this plan as they were considered part of Japan not a colony. When Molotov finally agreed to see the Japanese ambassador, it was to deliver to him the Soviet Declaration of War.<sup>57</sup>

The Japanese consider the Yalta agreement to be without any foundation in international law since Japan was not represented at the meetings, nor was it informed of its proceedings.<sup>58</sup>

#### **D. The Potsdam Proclamation**

On 26 July 1945, the Potsdam Proclamation was signed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain, the U.S. and the Republic of China. Article 8 of the declaration stated that "the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine."<sup>59</sup> Although the Kurils



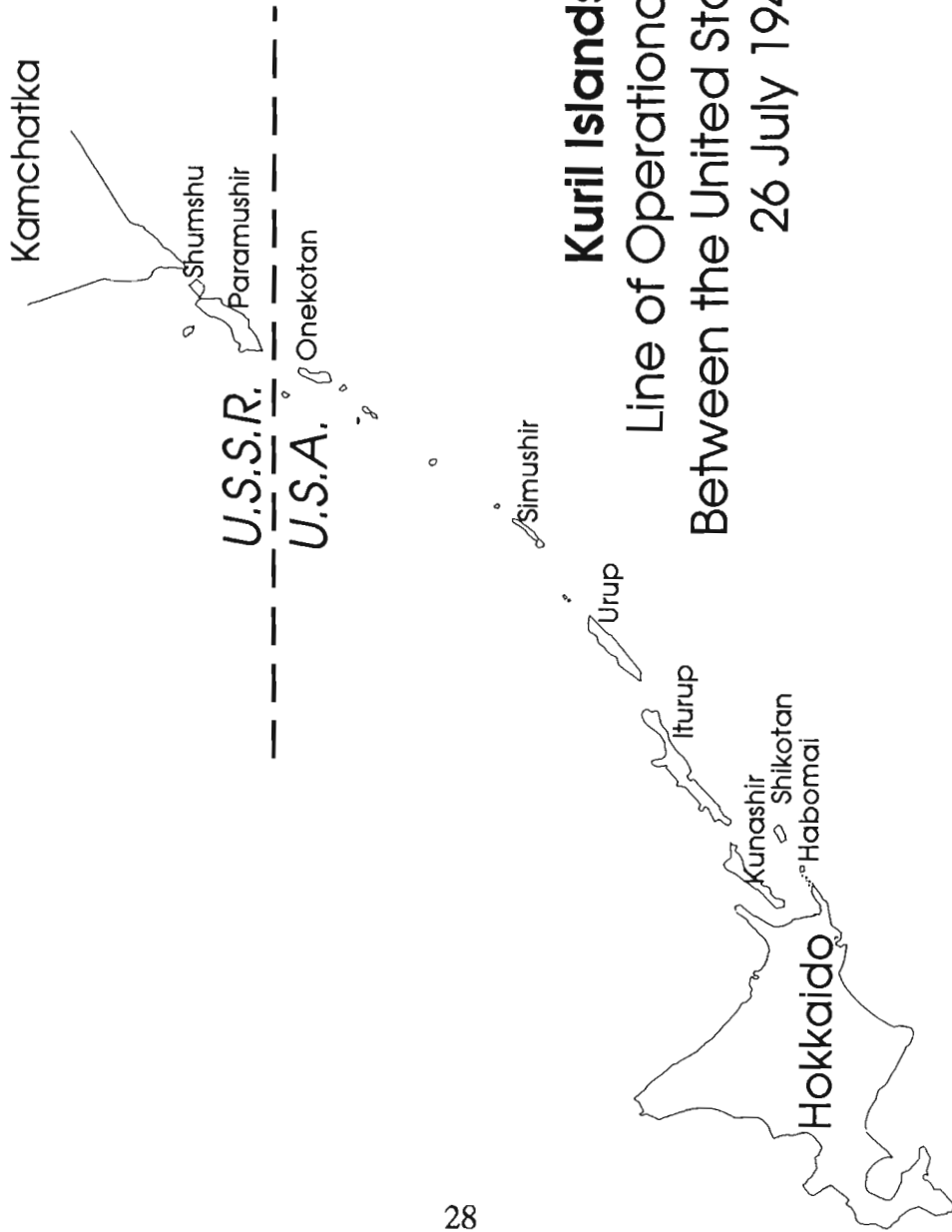
were not specifically mentioned in this proclamation, they would fall into the "such minor islands as we determine" category. Further, there was no other mention of possible disposition of territory, such as the Soviet claims to the Kuril Islands as recognized in the Yalta agreement, nor was the Soviet Union mentioned or a signatory to the proclamation. The Kurils, as previously mentioned, did not fall under the statements of the Cairo Declaration as having been "seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914" or as "territories which she has taken by violence and greed".

#### **E. General Order No. 1**

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and their Soviet counterparts, meeting on 26 July, developed a sea-air operational line that delineated areas of Soviet and U.S. operations. The line of demarcation in the Kurils was to pass through the middle of the strait between Paramushiro and Onnekotan [Fig 6]. The Soviets were to operate north of this line which basically confined Soviet operations in the Kurils to Shimushu and Paramushiro. The rest of the chain south to Hokkaido would be in the U.S. operational zone.<sup>60</sup> This placed the majority of the island chain under U.S. control, and had the Soviets remained within the operational area described, the four islands currently contested might still be part of Japan.

On 7 August 1945, the Japanese city of Hiroshima was destroyed by an

# Figure 6



atomic bomb. The Soviets quickly declared war on Japan on 8 August. On 9 August, Nagasaki was destroyed by a second atomic bomb and the Russians launched major military offensives in Manchuria, Korea and on Sakhalin Island. The Japanese, at the behest of the emperor, finally surrendered on 14 August 1945.<sup>61</sup>

After the Japanese surrender, the U.S. War Department promulgated "General Order No. 1" which governed the coordination of Japan's surrender. Under this order, Manchuria, Korea north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and South Sakhalin would surrender to the Soviet forces. Admiral Nimitz would accept the surrender of forces in the Pacific Ocean and Japan, the Philippines and the southern half of Korea would surrender to Gen. MacArthur. Although the Kurils were not specifically mentioned in the order, the Secretary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Brigadier-General A.J. MacFarland noted in a memorandum prepared for the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had agreed on the operational line that passed between Onnekotan and Paramushiro and thus "instruct Admiral Nimitz to plan on receiving the surrender of the Kuril islands south of this line."<sup>62</sup> The USSR responded to General Order No. 1 in a message to President Truman in which Stalin requested two corrections be made:

*"1. To include in the region of surrender of Japanese armed forces to Soviet troops all the Kuril Islands which, in accordance with the decisions of the three powers in the Crimea, have to come into possession of the Soviet Union.*

*2. To include in the region of surrender of the Japanese armed forces to Soviet troops the northern part of the island Hokkaido which adjoins*

*in the north to the La Perouse Strait which is between Karafuto[Sakhalin] and Hokkaido..."<sup>63</sup>*

Stalin further proposed "as we know, during the years 1919-1921, the entire Soviet Far East was occupied by Japanese troops. Russian public opinion would be seriously offended if Russian troops did not occupy some portion of actual Japanese territory."

On 17 August, President Truman responded to Stalin's request agreeing to modify Gen. Order No. 1 to include all of the Kuril islands in the region to be surrendered to the Soviet Union. As to Stalin's request to accept surrender of Japanese on northern Hokkaido, Truman dismissed this as arrangements had already been made for the surrender of Japanese forces in this area to Gen. MacArthur. Truman had remarked to the Soviets on numerous occasions that the disposition of Japanese territory would be settled at a peace conference.<sup>64</sup> Truman further qualified his reply by stating:

*"I should like it to be understood that the United States Government desires air base rights for land and sea aircraft on some one of the Kuril islands, preferably in the central group, for military purposes and for commercial use."<sup>65</sup>*

Following President Truman's reply to Stalin's proposal, Stalin responded to Truman by stating "My colleagues and I did not expect that kind of response from you." Although Truman's reply had been a disappointment to the Soviets, he did give them the only concession that they could not have taken anyway, the Kuriles. The U.S. could have restricted Soviet occupation of the islands but chose not to

do so. Though Truman attempted to preserve U.S. rights to bases in the islands, he did not pursue this stipulation therefore relinquishing any possible U.S. presence in the islands. The Soviet military however, continued to amass troops for an invasion of Hokkaido for four more days until finally ordered to postpone on 22 August 1945.<sup>66</sup>

#### **F. Soviet Seizure and Occupation**

After the surrender of Japan, Soviet General A. R. Gnechko was ordered to launch the Kuril operation within the next two days and seize the islands as far south as Uruppu. The islands of Etorofu, Kunashir, Shikotan and the Habomais would be seized by Soviet Pacific Fleet units.<sup>67</sup> On the night of 17-18 August 1945, the Soviet invasion of the Kurils began with artillery at Cape Lopatka on the southern tip of Kamchatka shelling the island of Shimushu. Soviet troops landed on Shimushu the next morning suffering heavy casualties estimated at 2,000 dead. A cease fire was agreed upon on 19 August but broke down soon after. The Japanese defenders finally surrendered, after receiving instructions from Army Headquarters in Hokkaido, on 21 August.<sup>68</sup>

By 31 August, the Kuril chain was occupied by the Soviets from the northern most island south to Uruppu and by 4 September, all of the remaining southern islands had been seized. On 3 September, the Soviets severed all communications between the Kurils and Hokkaido.<sup>69</sup> Stalin made his victory

speech to the Soviet Union on 2 September 1945, in which he stated:

*"Today, Japan has admitted defeat and signed an instrument of unconditional surrender. This means that Southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands have been transferred to the Soviet Union, and will henceforth serve not as a means for isolating our country from the ocean or as a base for Japanese aggression in our Far Eastern area, but as a means for linking the Soviet Union with the ocean and as a base for our defense against Japanese aggression."*<sup>70</sup>

Thousands of Japanese inhabitants of the islands who had access to boats, escaped to Hokkaido rather than remain behind under Soviet occupation. The Soviet government decided to annex the Kurils and populate them with Russians rather than convert the local Japanese inhabitants into a "Japanese Autonomous Republic."

Between 1947 and 1948, all of the Japanese residents of the islands were repatriated as their positions and functions were filled by Soviet citizens.<sup>71</sup> The island chain was declared to be Soviet territory on 20 September 1945 and was designated part of the Kharbarovsk region on 2 February 1946. All of the Japanese place names were changed to Russian names and on 2 January 1947, Moscow created Sakhalin Oblast, a new administrative district independent of Kharbarovsk, which included the Kurils and Sakhalin Island.<sup>72</sup> In the eyes of the Soviet government, the transformation was complete.

## **G. The San Francisco Convention**

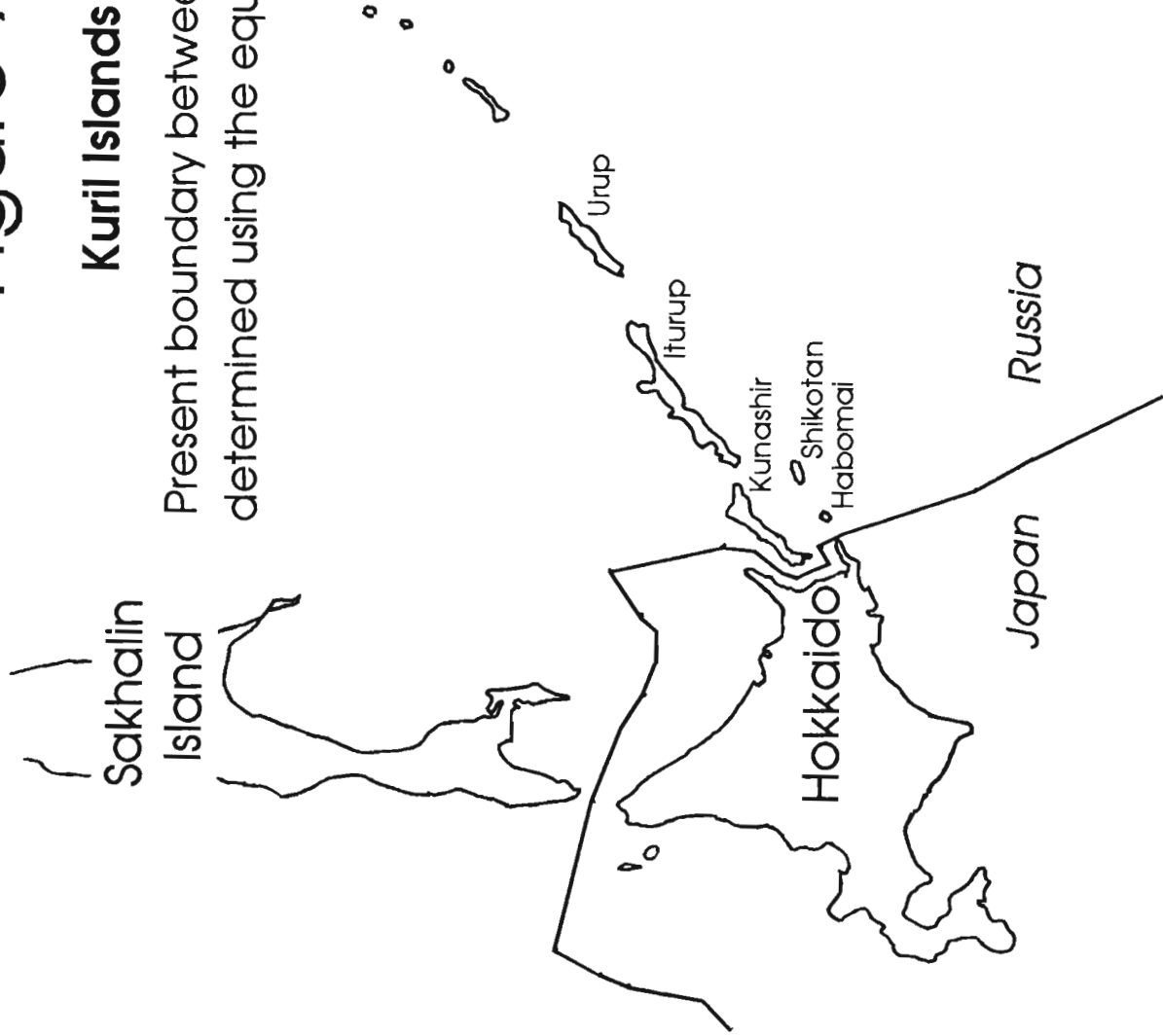
Following the Soviet Union annexation of the Kurils on 20 September 1945,<sup>73</sup> [Fig 7] Japanese feelings of irredentism began to grow rapidly. On the first of December 1945, 30,000 residents of Hokkaido submitted a petition via the Mayor of Nemuro to General MacArthur and the Allied Council objecting to the Soviet annexation and stating Japanese claims to the Islands. This petition was the first official post war claim to the islands by the Japanese.<sup>74</sup> No real action was taken on this request and on 29 January 1946, Supreme Commander Allied Forces Pacific issued directive No.677 which deprived Japan of any and all administrative rights to the Kurils. Further, on that same day, U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes revealed the secret Yalta agreement between Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill that handed the Kurils over to the U.S.S.R.<sup>75</sup> Japanese political leaders have continued to press for the reversion of the Southern Kurils, starting with the Hokkaido Prefectural Assembly which in 1946 passed the first of many motions calling for their return. On December 22, 1949 in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Diet House of Representatives a government point paper was delivered which denied the legality of the Yalta agreement and reasserted Japan's claims to the Southern Kurils and Sakhalin Island. Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida strongly voiced his support of this position a month later.<sup>76</sup>

Since then, Japanese postwar claims to the islands have focused solely on the four southern islands based on the fact that prior to 1945, Russia/U.S.S.R. had

# Figure 7

## Kuril Islands

Present boundary between Russia and Japan determined using the equidistant line method



Source: Limits in the Seas No. 107 U.S. Dept of State 30 Sept 1987



never exercised sovereignty over these islands. Further, 90 % of the Japanese inhabitants of the chain had lived on those four islands.<sup>77</sup> From 1949 on however, Japanese political leaders progressed through a series of contradictory positions, further complicating the issue.

In 1951, the U.S. and its allies, excluding the U.S.S.R., met in San Francisco to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan. During the negotiations, the term "Kuril Islands" was used to mean all islands between Hokkaido and Kamchatka with the two exceptions of Shikotan and the Habomais. In fact, Chief Japanese delegate to the convention Yoshida and U.S. Representative to the conference John Foster Dulles stated that the Soviets were illegally occupying Shikotan and the Habomais, but made no reference to the other two Southern Kuril Islands as being Japanese territory.<sup>78</sup> The U. S. position during the treaty negotiations was that Soviet participation in the treaty process and their subsequent acceptance of the treaty was the only legal vehicle by which title to South Sakhalin and the Kurils could be gained. The Soviets refused to participate, taking the position that the disposition of the Kurils and South Sakhalin had been decided at Cairo, Yalta and Potsdam.<sup>79</sup> The Japanese however, decided to abandon claims to these islands in order to bring a successful conclusion to the convention and regain their national independence.<sup>80</sup> The section in article II of the treaty that pertains to this particular issue stated:

*"c. Japan renounces all right, title and claim to the Kuril Islands, and to that portion of Sakhalin and the islands adjacent to it over which*

*Japan acquired sovereignty as a consequence of the Treaty of Portsmouth of 5 Sept. 1905.*<sup>81</sup>

The treaty, however, did not define the term "Kuril Islands", a point which has also further complicated the issue.

The United States was careful not to expressly award any territory to the Soviets via this treaty, as John Foster Dulles stated in a speech concerning the Japanese peace treaty in 1951, "any peace-treaty validation of Russia's title should, we suggest, be dependent upon Russia's becoming a party to that treaty."<sup>82</sup> Further, the final draft of the treaty stated in article 25 that no rights would be granted to any state which had not signed and ratified the treaty.

Initially, the Japanese were unhappy with the territorial aspects of the 1951 San Francisco Convention. Shigeru Yoshida, the chief Japanese delegate to the Convention, stated "Whereas the Japanese people accepted cheerfully the terms of this treaty, it is undeniable that we feel some anguish and concern with regard to a few of its provisions."<sup>83</sup> Since then, the Japanese government has maintained that "Kuril Islands" as used in this treaty was meant to include only those islands from Urup north to Kamchatka which were acquired from Russia under the Treaty of St. Petersburg. The Southern Kuril Islands of Kunashir, Iturup, Shikotan and Habomai were excluded from the definition of "Kuriles" and that Japan had not abandoned its claims to them.<sup>84</sup> The Russians, on the other hand, interpret this as meaning all of the islands from Hokkaido to Kamchatka.

## H. Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration

During the 1950's, the Soviet Union undertook diplomatic initiatives to normalize relations with countries such as Austria, West Germany and Japan. Japan was anxious to normalize relations with the Soviet Union in order to resolve a number of issues other than territorial claims. The Soviets had threatened to veto Japan's entrance into the United Nations, and even more important was the return of Japanese prisoners of war still held by the Soviets. In 1951, the Japanese government had estimated that 234,151 Japanese prisoners had already died in Soviet camps, 28,797 more were listed as missing or unaccounted for and a further 14,504 were still being detained.<sup>85</sup>

Beginning in June of 1955, Japanese and Soviet delegations met in London to work out a peace treaty and normalization of relations. Although publicly the Japanese demanded the return of southern Sakhalin and all of the Kuriles, they were prepared to accept the return of Shikotan and the Habomais and sacrifice the rest for bargaining power.<sup>86</sup> The Soviets submitted a wide array of demands including the military neutralization of Japan, placing the two sides far apart.<sup>87</sup>

After only three months of negotiations, the Soviets surprisingly announced on 5 August 1955 that they would be willing to return Shikotan and the Habomais virtually assuring an acceptable agreement. The Japanese however, announced on 30 August that they also demanded the return of Kunashir and Iturup and that the question of Japanese sovereignty over the rest of the Kuril chain be submitted

to international conference for decision. This about face by the Japanese so angered the Soviets that they broke off negotiations.<sup>88</sup> Relations between the two nations were further strained when the Soviet Union vetoed Japan's admission to the United Nations in December of 1955.<sup>89</sup>

In 1956, mounting domestic pressure forced Japan back to the bargaining table but the two countries could not reach a compromise on the issue of the Southern Kuriles. Moscow then added additional pressure to the Japanese by imposing a series of new fishing restrictions in the North Pacific. Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu, leader of the delegation for the third round of talks, abandoned the claims for South Sakhalin and the northern and central Kuriles, concentrating solely on the Southern Kuriles. The Soviets would not give in, however, and Soviet Foreign Minister Shepilov stated that Japan's continued assertion of rights to the southern Kurils was "unrealistic." Further, Shepilov commented that Japan had renounced these islands in the San Francisco Convention and that there was no validity to its claim that Kunashir and Iturup were not part of Kuriles. Shepilov stated that the U.S.S.R. would be willing to return Shikotan and the Habomais in "the cause of peace."<sup>90</sup>

In August of 1956, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu was told by Khrushchev and Bulganin that the return of Shikotan and the Habomais was their final offer.<sup>91</sup> The U.S. tried to aid Japan in its efforts by submitting an Aide-Memoire to Japan on 7 September of that year which, *inter alia*, stated:

*"With respect to the territorial question, as the Japanese Government has been previously informed, the United States regards the so-called Yalta Agreement as simply a statement of common purposes by the then heads of the participating powers, and not as a final determination by those powers or of any legal effect in transferring territories. The San Francisco Peace Treaty (which conferred no rights upon the Soviet Union because it refused to sign) did not determine the sovereignty of the territories renounced by Japan, leaving that question, as was stated by the Delegate of the United States at San Francisco, to 'international solvents other than this treaty'..."*

*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 part of Hokkaido) have always been part of Japan proper and should in justice be acknowledged as under Japanese sovereignty. The United States would regard Soviet agreement to this effect as a positive contribution to the reduction of tension in the Far East."<sup>92</sup>*

Unfortunately for the Japanese, the U.S. Aide-Memoire only made the Soviets more obstinate in the negotiations.

A compromise was finally reached in October of 1956 which would normalize relations between the two countries but defer a settlement of territorial claims until the conclusion of a proper peace treaty. The Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration, signed 19 October 1956 stated:

*"The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Japan agree to continue, after the restoration of normal diplomatic relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Japan, negotiations for the conclusion of a peace treaty.*

*In this connexion, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, desiring to meet the wishes of Japan and taking into consideration the interests of the Japanese state, agrees to transfer to Japan the Habomai Islands and the island of Shikoton, the actual transfer of these islands to Japan to take place after the conclusion of a Peace Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Japan."<sup>93</sup>*

## **IV. Recent Negotiations**

### **A. The New Russia**

The progressive policies of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980's brought new hope to the Japanese that, what was in their view Soviet intransigence on the Kurils issue, might soon be broken. The policy of Glastnost, the new openness, sparked much discussion within the Soviet Union on a variety of issues, the Kurile Islands dispute among them.

In 1990, Gorbachev became the first Soviet (or Russian) head of state to ever visit Japan. Prior to and during this visit, expectations were high that some sort of compromise would be reached. Prior to Gorbachev's 1990 visit to Tokyo, Japanese envoys had indicated to the Soviets and Gorbachev that Japan was willing to put 26 billion dollars forth in aid to the Soviet Union if it would indicate a willingness to return the islands. The Japanese offered to accept two islands immediately, Shikotan and the Habomais, as per the Soviet-Japanese joint declaration of 1956 with the others being turned over in five years. Included in the Japanese offer would be \$4 billion in emergency loans from the Export-Import Bank of Japan, \$4 billion for reimbursing the Soviet Union for relocating its citizens, withdrawing troops and compensating for the loss of property. Also include would be \$8 billion for private sector loans to develop oil and gas projects and \$10 billion in low interest loans for factory building and road development.<sup>94</sup> Boris Yeltsin, as President of the Russian Soviet Federalist Republic, in 1990

suggested that the territorial issue could be resolved in a five-stage plan; 1) officially recognize the territorial problem, 2) reduce the military presence, 3) establish visits to the islands without the need for visas, 4) further demilitarization and 5) the signing of a peace treaty.<sup>95</sup>

Gorbachev however, made no concessions on the Kurile issue, dashing the hopes of many Japanese and further stalling the development of a peace treaty and the improvement of relations between the two nations.

Japanese expectations of a settlement of the Kurils and a peace treaty began to climb again in 1991. With the individual Soviet Republics gaining more autonomy and Boris Yeltsin gaining a great deal of power and popularity, the Japanese were hopeful that an agreement might be possible. Ruslan Khasbulatov, acting Chairman of the Russian Republic Supreme Soviet, was sent to Japan in September of 1991 to hold diplomatic discussions with Prime Minister Kaifu and Foreign Minister Nakayama during which he delivered a letter from President of the Russian Republic Yeltsin to Prime Minister Kaifu.<sup>96</sup> During these discussions, Khasbulatov conveyed the following objectives:

*"(1) the differentiation between the victorious and defeated countries in World War II should be abandoned.*

*(2) the settlement of the Territorial Issue should be based on law and justice, and*

*(3) the period of reaching such a settlement through five stages as proposed by President Yeltsin in January of 1990 should be shortened."<sup>97</sup>*

Overtures such as this, caused even greater expectations for a settlement of the

issue when the Soviet Union transformed into the Commonwealth of Independent States and Boris Yeltsin became President of the newly created Russia.

President Yeltsin is joined by many other officials who recognize the problems posed by this issue and the potential benefits of an acceptable solution. Russian Deputy Chairman and Minister of the Press Mikhail Poltoranin stated that the President of Russia and its leadership would solve the Kurils issue on the basis of the 1956 declaration.<sup>98</sup> He further proposed that a 10-15 year transitional period be established to settle the problem during which, Japan would provide Russia with economic compensation.<sup>99</sup> Peoples deputy of Russia Aleksey Surkov, who is a member of the Russian Supreme Soviet Committee on International Affairs and Foreign Trade Links wrote in an article in May of 1992, "Indeed, the fact of the USSR Supreme Soviet's recognition in 1956 of the Joint Declaration is irrefutable proof that the Soviet side understood the injustice of keeping the Kuril Islands within the borders of the Soviet Union's territory."<sup>100</sup> An official of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Mr. A. Yefimov, stated in an interview that "we were the sole country which, as a result of World War II, made territorial gains. It may now be said that this was done unjustly."<sup>101</sup>

Many Russians however, including the governor of Sakhalin Oblast, are opposed to the return of the islands and have proven to create strong domestic opposition to any proposals. A recent poll of Russians living on the South Kurils indicated that a majority of them do not want them returned to Japan.<sup>102</sup> The



governor of Sakhalin has been moving Cossacks into the southern Kurils to stress his strong opposition to their return.<sup>103</sup> Not all of the residents of the Kurils share his views and a large portion of the population of Kunashir was not pleased with this "importation" of new residents and collected more than 1,600 signatures against it. They then sent a telegram to the President of the Russian Federation demanding a stop to the settling of Cossacks on the islands and the removal of the governor.<sup>104</sup> The Japanese government, as a way to dispel any fears that the island's inhabitants might have, has stated that they will work to aid the residents of the islands in any way possible to ease a transition back to Japanese control.<sup>105</sup>

Other, more influential officials have also formed a strong opposition to any plans for the islands return. A group of Russian Federation People's Deputies sent an open letter to President Yeltsin on 14 July 1992, protesting the possibility of returning the Kurils. In this letter they stated that returning this territory without a vote by parliament or a referendum by the people is unthinkable. They also expressed their concern that ceding the islands to Japan will cause a revival of territorial claims "If we hand over the South Kurils, tomorrow an avalanche of aggressive claims to our land will ensue. Even inside Russia we will be unable to avoid a stormy explosion of separatism and bloody discord."<sup>106</sup> A recent report prepared for the German government agrees with these findings concluding that if Russia were to cede the Kuril Islands to Japan,

it would cause a chain reaction of subsequent territorial claims in the Baltic and Eastern Europe.<sup>107</sup>

There is a tremendous amount of interest on the subject in the Russian press as well. Writing in the *New Times* in 1992, People's Deputy of the USSR Vitaly Gulii proposed declaring the islands a demilitarized zone and forming a joint Soviet-Japanese administration to govern the islands as a free economic zone.<sup>108</sup> Deputy Gulii also illustrated that the USSR is not receiving any real economic benefits from the Kurils since nothing more than fish processing is being conducted there. The vast natural resources of the islands are beyond the Soviet Union's capability to exploit, and will probably remain so for at least the remainder of the century. Cooperation with the Japanese would allow the USSR to benefit economically from Japan's technology and investment. Further, a compromise of this sort would probably result in a successful termination of the stalemate over the issue. If Japan refused to participate in such an endeavor, they might appear as a spoiler and lose the sympathy of many of the world's nations on this issue.

Not all discussion in the press has been favorable to the Japanese however. Professor L. Valenkevich of the Mordovia State University, also writing in the *New Times*, argued against returning the islands stating that "first, they will get Southern Kurils, and then they will demand Northern Kurils and Southern Sakhalin."<sup>109</sup> He suggested instead that the USSR concentrate on promoting

economic cooperation with South Korea, Hong Kong and other Asian countries. Numerous Russian officials are concerned that returning the Kurils would prompt territorial claims by others such as China, Estonia, Latvia and Finland.<sup>110</sup> The issue continues to be a controversial one for Russian politicians.

Neither side seems to be embracing any new ideas or departing from the positions of the past four decades. Although many working conferences have been held between the two nations to try and hammer out a solution to the problem, no progress seems to have been made. The Russians cite the fact that the Japanese renounced the islands in article II of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which stated:

*"c. Japan renounces all right, title and claim to the Kuril Islands, and to that portion of Sakhalin and the islands adjacent to it over which Japan acquired sovereignty as a consequence of the Treaty of Portsmouth of 5 Sept. 1905."*<sup>111</sup>

The Japanese counter that the term "Kuril Islands" did not refer to the four islands in question. Sumio Edamura, Ambassador plenipotentiary of Japan in Russia, stated during an interview in 1992 that the "four islands currently in question were never in the precedents of international law part of the Kuril islands concept. According to the first Japanese-Russian treaty of 1855, some 18 islands from Urup northward were called the Kurils. The same terminology is contained in the second Japanese-Russian treaty of 1875."<sup>112</sup> Japanese Premier Kiichi Miyazawa has stated "both sides know" that the 1855 Russo Japanese

treaty which recognized these islands as Japanese territory "was concluded peacefully."<sup>113</sup>

Russian President Boris Yeltsin, having displayed a willingness to compromise on a settlement in the past, seems to have retreated from his previous position, possibly due to strong opposition from the military and other influential leaders. Japan's reluctance to commit to any substantial economic aid has further strengthened Yeltsin's obstinance prompting his July 1992 statement that Japan is "the only country which has not invested anything into Russia - not a cent, not half a dollar, not half a yen."<sup>114</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe countered by saying that statements such as this undermine the position of the Japanese government and that Japan will make more efforts to aid Russia in the future as long as Russia takes a positive heading on the Kuril problem.<sup>115</sup> Further, Watanabe is reported to have stated that "if we can agree in principle (on Japan's sovereignty over the islands), economic cooperation will be extended in a more dynamic fashion."<sup>116</sup> This statement is characteristic of Japan's attitude towards relations with Russia which is essentially based on balancing a national desire to restrict aid to Russia until the islands are returned with a desire to be perceived as cooperating with western aid efforts. The economic and humanitarian aid that Japan has been willing to put forth thus far has had a variety of "strings" attached. Japan has asserted that most of its aid funding be channeled through multilateral institutions such as the international monetary fund

rather than Japanese-Russian bilateral aid. The Japanese also resist providing aid that might benefit Russia's military such as constructing housing for military returning from other former Soviet republics.<sup>117</sup> Japanese Foreign Ministry officials have stated that Japanese aid to Russia has been carefully calculated to be high enough to avoid international criticisms, but low enough to entice Russia into a Kuril settlement to gain added economic benefits.<sup>118</sup>

Recently, Russia has made moves that may be interpreted as symbolic of their reluctance to compromise by signing an important fishing treaty with South Korea and establishing "special economic zones" in the Kurils. The agreement which allows Korean fishermen access to waters off the South Kurile islands, may complicate any possible settlement of the territorial problem and has upset many Japanese government officials.<sup>119</sup> The decisions to establish special economic zones in the Kurils and lease land there to foreign corporations for 99 years has also drawn much concern from Tokyo. The Japanese government fears that some Japanese companies may participate in the economic development within these zones, thus tacitly recognizing Russian sovereignty over the islands.<sup>120</sup> Japan is also using its economic clout in the region to dissuade firms in other Asian-Pacific nations from entering into negotiations with Russia to develop the islands special zones.<sup>121</sup>

President Yeltsin, however, has larger more pressing problems than the issue of Kurils sovereignty. His continuous battle for power with the Russian

Congress and his recent proclamation of emergency powers for himself until the April 25th referendum has, at least temporarily, weakened him politically. Further, his attention is focused on a number of other issues, most importantly balancing the need for foreign aid to bolster the Russian economy with maintaining an aura of pride and self confidence without being perceived as extending a beggar's tin cup. During the recent Vancouver summit meeting with U.S. President Clinton, Mr. Yeltsin responded to a question concerning how much foreign aid would be needed by Russia in stating "you see, too much is not very good either, too little is not very good. Too much also could be bad, because it can be used by Communists to target us. The opposition will say we are shackled to the west."<sup>122</sup> This fear of Yeltsin's was buttressed by a statement from one of his staunchest opponents, Ruslan Khasbulatov, who complained that the western nations were "rushing too fast to support the ill-conceived steps of one political side in Russia."<sup>123</sup> If President Yeltsin were to come to a compromise with Japan on the Kurils in order to gain more economic aid, it would undoubtedly play into the hands of his critics who would cast him as a tool of the "capitalists" and cost him important popular support.

### **B. National Security**

Since the second world war, Japan's defense has been a major element in the U.S. military strategy in the east asian Pacific region. The U.S. has primarily focused on avoiding military confrontation in the region by maintaining a large capable

military force to discourage any aggressive actions by the U.S.S.R. and its associates. U.S. military presence in the region was a comforting reassurance to the Japanese for nearly three decades.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's, however, the Japanese government developed a renewed interest in national defense, which was initiated by a serious uneasiness over the United States commitment to Japan's defense. This uneasiness primarily developed during the Carter Presidency when U.S. reaction to world events such as the revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led Japanese leaders to question America's resolve to defend Japan.<sup>124</sup> These concerns were further strengthened by President Carter's announcement to withdraw all U.S. ground forces from Korea without consulting the Japanese government. Japan viewed the positioning of U.S. troops in Korea as a form of Japanese "outer defense perimeter."<sup>125</sup> Further, the large Soviet military buildup in the Kurils, primarily the deployment of ground forces to Kunashir and Iturup, was a direct threat to Japan's national security.<sup>126</sup> The deployment of U.S. Pacific fleet elements away from Japan to the Indian Ocean also resulted in a heightened level of anxiety as did the stationing of Soviet naval units in Vietnam.<sup>127</sup>

During this same time frame, threatening Soviet military actions in and around Japan were on the increase and were viewed by Tokyo as a serious potential threat to Japan. Flyovers by Russian aircraft, the development of new larger military installations in the South Kurils and intense naval maneuvers off the coast of Japan and in the South Kurils continued to worry Japan's leaders.<sup>128</sup>

During the Presidency of Ronald Reagan, the increased buildup of the U.S. military alleviated many of the earlier fears of the Japanese and rejuvenated Japan's confidence in the U.S. This renewed confidence, however, did not alter Japan's commitment to the increase in its defense forces. President Reagan later stated in an address to the Japanese people during his visit to Japan in 1983 "...the most important contribution Japan can make towards the peace and security in Asia is for Japan to provide for its own defense and share more of the burden of our mutual defense effort."<sup>129</sup>

Japanese concerns about their national security vis-a-vis the Russians are well founded. The Japanese perceive Russian control of the South Kurils as a threat to their national security and have long felt that in the event of hostilities, Russia would attempt to capture the island of Hokkaido using Sakhalin and the Kurils as their stepping stone in order to control both sides of the Soya (La Perouse) strait, securing safe passage for Russian warships from Vladivostok to the Pacific. Russia's other option to the Pacific would be the straits of Tsushima between Japan and Korea which could easily be blockaded by U.S. Military forces stationed in Japan and Korea[Figure 8], the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and the Korean Navy. The stationing of troops on Kunashir and Iturup seems to buttress this fear. Current Russian troop strength (as estimated by the Japanese) in the Far Eastern region is approximately 360,000<sup>130</sup> an unknown number of which are stationed in the Southern Kurils. The Russians also have 2,240 aircraft and a great number of warships and submarines stationed in the region.<sup>131</sup> The combined forces of all



**Figure 8**  
Location of U.S. Military bases in Japan  
and South Korea



three branches of the Japanese Self Defense forces is only 156,000 ground troops, 430 aircraft and 170 ships. Further, the Russian navy has a number of amphibious landing craft homeported in the Pacific that would be well suited for an attack on the Japanese homeland.

Russia also considers the Kuril Islands as an important piece of its regional national security strategy. The Russian Navy announced its opposition to the return of any of the Kurils during a closed door parliamentary session held on the issue.<sup>132</sup> The Russian Defense Ministry testified that territorial concessions to Japan do not suit Russia's strategic interests. Further, the loss of these islands would deprive the Russian Pacific Fleet of its outlet to the Pacific through ice free straits and would give the navies and air forces of possible adversaries access to the Sea of Okhotsk. In July of 1992, Russian Rear Admiral Kasin warned that the return of the islands would have a drastically adverse effect on Russia's national security because it will remove the advantage of having additional strike aircraft in close proximity to U.S. naval forces homeported in Japan. Kasin further stated "in the event of the transfer of the Southern Kurils to Japan, U.S. and Japanese naval strike forces, which can operate against the Primorskiy Krai and Sakhalin will become invulnerable to our forces."<sup>133</sup> Many Defense Ministry officials also feel that the return of the Kurils would also violate one of the basic principles of Russian foreign policy, that postwar borders are inviolable.<sup>134</sup>

The business ventures in Siberia and the Far East entered into by the Japanese have drawn a lot of criticism from Russian officials and citizens that the

Japanese are embarking on a new form of "neo-colonialism." Many feel that Japan's primary goal in the Russian Far East is economic gain in the form of an inexpensive source of raw materials for its industry without helping Russia to develop technologies and industries that would bring jobs and prosperity to the region.<sup>135</sup> Allowing Japan easy access to the region's raw materials without securing cooperation to build a larger industrial base in the region or gain advanced technology would be detrimental to Russia's economic stability and national security.

Although the breakup of the Soviet Union has seemed to alleviate many fears of military conflict in the region, the political structure of the country is far from stable and there is still some reason for concern. A separatist movement has surfaced in the Far East region desiring to create an independent republic out of the Far Eastern provinces of Siberia, Primorski, Sakhalin and Kamchatka.<sup>136</sup> Although this separatist movement does not seem to have any real power, it is indicative of some of the political unrest that is becoming a matter of concern for the nation's leaders. Many of Russia's problems must be solved and economic stability must be achieved before Japan can seriously consider the threat to their national security posed by Russia to be eliminated. Conversely, with Russia becoming more introspective with regards to its economy and industry, rushing into a settlement with Japan does not seem to be a priority even if it means a short term economic boost.

### **C. Maritime Jurisdiction**

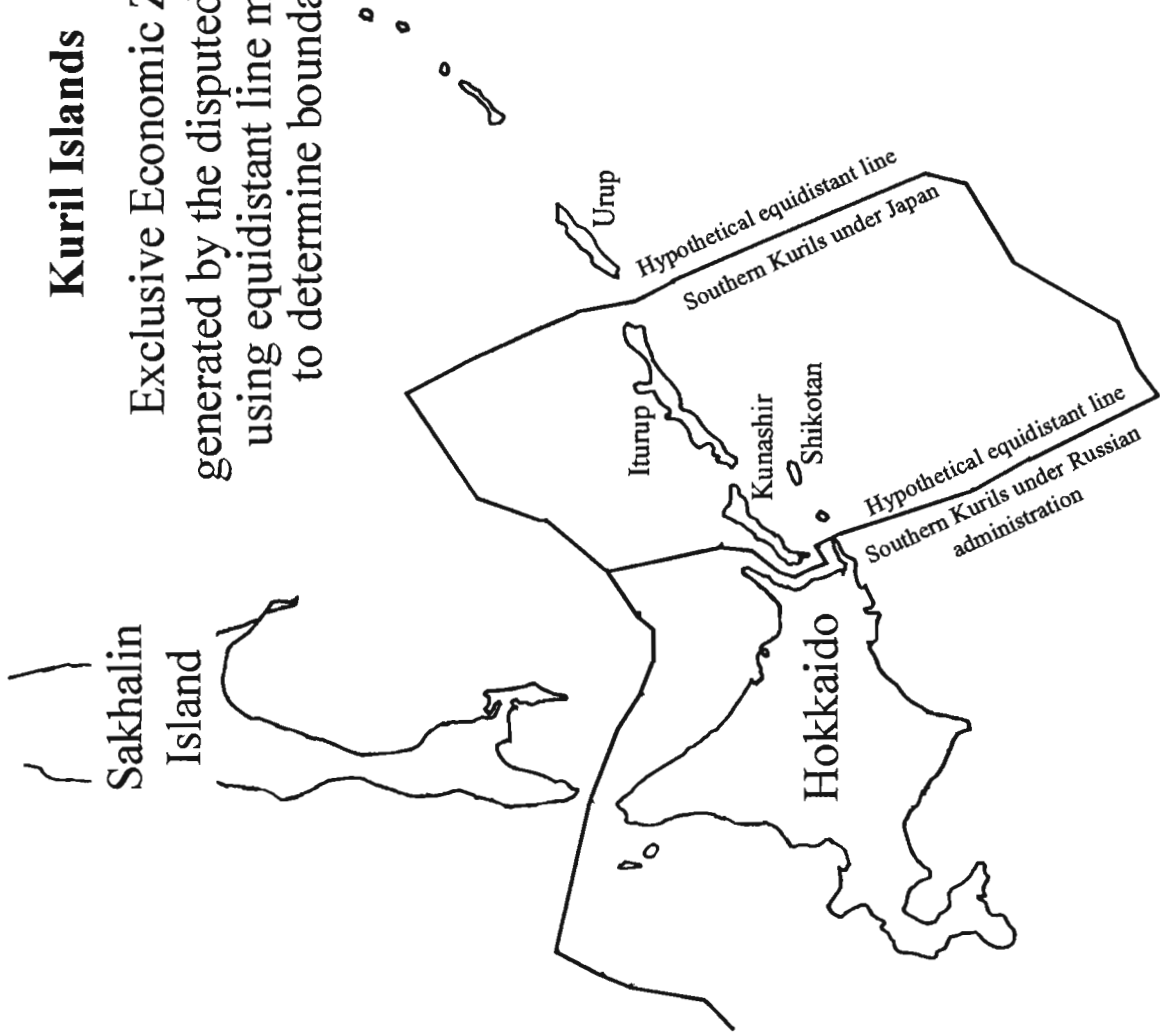
The Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea has added a new dimension to the Kuril Islands dispute, that of creeping maritime jurisdiction. Both nations have extended their territorial sea out to twelve nautical miles with the Japanese exception of 3nm in five "international straits."<sup>137</sup> Russia has declared a 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in accordance with Part V of this Convention and Japan claims a 200 nm Exclusive Fishery Zone.<sup>138</sup> The four Kuril islands in question, generate an enormous EEZ that extends over a very valuable continental shelf and some of the richest fishing waters in that area of the Pacific [Figure 9]. The economic benefits that can be derived from the resources of this area, although substantial, seem to be only a small part of the current dispute. As discussed previously, Russia is currently not exploiting the majority of the islands resources and probably will not in the near future. Further, Siberia's vast resources make it unnecessary to explore the islands potential.

As for Japan, its fishermen already enjoy many fishing privileges in the waters off the islands and would not gain much benefit from their return. Although the possibility of oil and gas resources being found on the continental shelf is great, the potential size of the deposits would not have a significant impact on Japan's foreign import needs. An analysis of media reporting on the issue over the past three years has yielded very little discussion of the potential exploitable resources of the chain as a major reason for their return. In fact, the inhospitable nature of most of the island chain makes exploitation somewhat difficult. Entering into Siberian joint

# Figure 9

## Kuril Islands

Exclusive Economic Zone  
generated by the disputed islands  
using equidistant line method  
to determine boundary



Source: *Limits in the Seas No. 107* U.S. Dept of State 30 Sept 1987

ventures is less capital intensive and potentially more profitable since the infrastructure for removal and transportation of resources is already in place.

#### **D. The Legality of the Russian Position**

Whether or not the occupation and subsequent annexation of these islands by the Soviet Union is admissible under international law is an interesting and difficult question. The accepted view of nations today is that the annexation of occupied territory is a violation of international law and title to any territory must not change until there is either a peace conference that settles the issue or complete subjugation of the occupied nation.<sup>139</sup> The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907 developed a set of rules for modern law that were designed to regulate military actions in wartime. Article 23 of the 1907 (Hague) Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land listed among actions that were specifically prohibited "To destroy or seize the enemy's property, unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of war."<sup>140</sup> This convention further states in article 46 that "Private property can not be confiscated."<sup>141</sup> Both Japan and the then Russian Empire were party to this convention thus these conventions should apply. The Russian Revolution and accompanying change of government would have no effect on this treaty's binding on the U.S.S.R. As von Glahn writes in *Law Among Nations*:

*If one party to an international agreement changes its form of government or expands or contracts its geographical boundaries, the provisions of the treaty in question are usually not affected by such changes...*<sup>142</sup>

The United States, among other nations, has long recognized this fact as illustrated in *Lehigh Valley R. Co. v. State of Russia*, in which the U.S. District Court for the 2nd circuit concluded:

*It is an established principle of international law that "Changes in the government or the internal policy of a state do not as a rule affect its position in international law...  
...though the government changes, the nation remains, with rights and obligations unimpaired."<sup>143</sup>*

Thus, the Soviets were bound by the Hague Conventions and should not have seized the property of the Kurils. This situation does not end with the Hague rules however. The occupation of enemy territory in wartime is also recognized by the 1949 IV Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War as a temporary situation which deprives the occupied power the ability to exercise its rights over that territory but does not deprive it of its statehood or sovereignty. Occupation of territory as a result of war does not imply any right to dispose of the territory. A final decision on annexation can only be reached by a peace treaty.<sup>144</sup> Both Japan and the U.S.S.R. are party to Geneva IV, the U.S.S.R. one of the original signatories when it came into force 21 October 1950, and Japan having acceded to the treaty 21 April 1953.<sup>145</sup> At the time the Soviets signed this convention, they were still occupying the Kurils. Their 1946 annexation of the chain, however, violated this convention since no formal peace treaty between the two nations had been concluded. The continued absence of a peace treaty between these two nations leaves the legalities of this situation in a position of some uncertainty.

As discussed previously, all of the Japanese residents of the islands were

"repatriated" or deported between 1947 and 1948 as their positions and functions were filled by Soviet citizens that were transferred into the islands. The questions of deportations and transfer of civilians was also addressed by this convention. Article 49 states:

*Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive.*<sup>146</sup>

This article further states:

*The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.*<sup>147</sup>

As has been documented, the Soviet Union began moving its citizens into the Kurils immediately after it began its occupation of the chain and continues to do so today. This continued action is a further violation of the IV Geneva Convention.

Japanese postwar claims to the Kuril Islands have focused solely on the four southern islands. Japanese political leaders have continued to press for the reversion of the Southern Kurils and have officially reasserted Japan's claims to the Southern Kurils and Sakhalin Island. The final disposition of these islands, in accordance with the Hague Rules, should be decided by a peace treaty as stated in the 1956 Joint Communiqué. Therein lies the difficulty, both sides desire a peace treaty that, *inter alia*, resolves this issue but neither side will compromise on the issue to bring about an agreement.

Defining what is meant legally by the term "Kuril Islands" is an additionally complex endeavor which neither the Russians or the Japanese agree upon. The



Japanese contend that Kuril Islands represents only the islands from Urup north to Kamchatka, but the Russians state that the term encompasses all Islands from Hokkaido to Kamchatka. Geographically, they are all part of the same archipelago, with the exception of Habomai and Shikotan which are extensions of Hokkaido. Mr. Sumio Edamura, Ambassador plenipotentiary of Japan in Russia, stated during an interview in 1992 that the " four islands currently in question were never in the precedents of international law part of the Kuril islands concept. According to the first Japanese- Russian treaty of 1855, some 18 islands from Urup northward were called the Kurils. The same terminology is contained in the second Japanese-Russian treaty of 1875."<sup>148</sup> This treaty, however, is ambiguous in its definition of "Kuril Islands." The verbiage that the Japanese often refer to states *[t]he whole island of Etorofu[Iturup] belongs to Japan and the whole island of Uruppu[Urup] and the other Kuril Islands to the north constitute possessions of Russia.*<sup>149</sup> Japan interprets this as meaning only the islands from Urup north are the Kurils, but because the passage states *the other Kuril Islands to the north*, it can also be interpreted to mean that all islands in the chain are considered the Kuril Islands in the legal context.

The 1875 St. Petersburg Treaty is also ambiguous in this sense and does not strongly support Japan's allegations. Article two of the St. Petersburg treaty states *[h]is Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, for himself and His descendants, cedes to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan the group of the Kuril islands which he possesses at present... so that henceforth the said group of Kuril Islands shall belong to the Empire*

*of Japan*.<sup>150</sup> Because this passage (also ambiguous in its definition of the term Kuril Islands) states that the Emperor of Russia cedes *the group of Kuril Islands which he possesses at present*, it can be interpreted to imply that Russia did not possess all of the islands in the chain rather only a select group. A review of these two treaties does not seem to lend strong support to Japan's interpretation of its meaning, nor does it completely support the Russians contention that the term Kurils means all of the islands from Hokkaido to Kamchatka.

The 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, however, lends strong support to the Russian definition of the Kurils chain. In the San Francisco Treaty, the Japanese renounced "all right, title and claim to the Kuril Islands, and to that portion of Sakhalin and the islands adjacent to it over which Japan acquired sovereignty as a consequence of the Treaty of Portsmouth of 5 Sept. 1905."<sup>151</sup> This action, from the Soviet point of view, legitimized the Soviet annexation of these territories. The Japanese continue to assert that the four islands in question were not part of the Kurils and thus were not addressed by this article of the treaty. In fact, this is not the case. As discussed previously, during the negotiations, the term "Kuril Islands" was used to mean all islands between Hokkaido and Kamchatka with the two exceptions of Shikotan and the Habomais. Chief Japanese delegate to the convention Yoshida and U.S. Representative to the conference John Foster Dulles stated during the treaty negotiations that the Soviets were illegally occupying Shikotan and the Habomais, but made no reference to the other two Southern Kuril Islands as being Japanese territory.<sup>152</sup> The U. S. position during the treaty negotiations was that

Soviet participation in the treaty process and its subsequent acceptance of the treaty was the only legal vehicle by which title to South Sakhalin and the Kurils could be gained.

The Japanese government continues to maintained that "Kuril Islands" as used in this treaty was meant to include only those islands from Urup north to Kamchatka which were acquired from Russia under the Treaty of St. Petersburg. The Southern Kuril Islands of Kunashir, Iturup, Shikotan and Habomai were excluded from the definition of "Kurils" therefore Japan had not abandoned its claims to them.<sup>153</sup> Japan seems to be the only nation with this particular view of the Kurils definition, virtually all other references include the four disputed islands as part of the Kurils.

## V. Conclusions

Contention over the Kurils is an issue that has pitted the Japanese and the Russians against each other since their first contact and does not seem to be nearing a resolution. Although some international sentiments seem to favor the Japanese position, the actual legalities of the dispute are somewhat obscure, confused by the Yalta agreement, the annexation of the chain by the former Soviet Union and Japan's renunciation of title to the islands in the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty. But the current intransigence on the issue has little to do with legalities, economic aid, resource exploitation or territorial expansionism. The points at stake here between the two nations are: 1) Russian national security; and 2) Japanese national honor. Both of these points of contention are difficult to quantify and make the formulation of a compromise extremely difficult.

For the Japanese, this issue embodies a number of unpleasantries; the surprising Soviet seizure of the island chain after the Japanese surrender, the secret Yalta agreement giving the Kurils to the Soviet Union, the incarceration and death of Soviet held Japanese prisoners of war, the mass deportation of Japanese inhabitants of the islands, the renunciation of title to the islands in the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the failure of the 1956 Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration to resolve the issue. The "Northern Territories" has been a rallying cry for many politicians over the years and a single issue which embodies the evils of the Soviet empire and around which has been based a great portion of their east asian foreign policy. Although the positioning of Soviet/Russian troops and aircraft on the islands is an extremely close

and direct military threat to the Japanese, the threat from Russian military assets on Sakhalin Island and the mainland are just as menacing and in some cases, closer to major military establishments such as the U.S. Naval base at Sasebo. Further, the close proximity of Siberia's vast natural resources such as timber, mineral resources, oil and gas are too important to Japan's long term industrial health to overlook. Better relations between the two nations and increasing levels of Japanese investment and development would greatly benefit both states.

For Russia, maintaining control of the island chain and the passages through them is far too important to its national security to forfeit. The Russian Pacific Fleet at Vladivostok is limited in its ability to sortie into the Pacific since the Tsushima Strait and the straits through the Japanese home islands are not safe options. Thus, protecting their passage through the Soya Strait and the various straits through the Kurils provides the Russians with a great deal of flexibility. This single issue in the dispute is extremely important for the Russian military and possibly for President Yeltsin. Mr. Yeltsin's perceived retreat from the issue may indicate that the military has convinced him of the islands importance in Russia's overall defensive strategy. Although President Yeltsin would enjoy the economic benefits that improved relations with Japan could bring his country, the importance of this real estate and sea lanes may be too high a price to pay politically. Further, Russian leaders are very concerned that returning the islands would set a precedent for other territorial claims.

Since 1945, the Japanese have negotiated from a position of relative weakness which has prevented a settlement in their favor. With the economic problems that

Russia is now having, Japan is perceived to be negotiating from a position of strength, a factor which is also working against a settlement in their favor. The Russians, especially the reformers such as President Yeltsin, do not want to be pressured from an economically stronger Japan, nor do they desire to be viewed as caving in to Japanese demands or "selling out" their national interests. As Mr. Yeltsin has stated, the hard line communists could turn such an advantage to their favor in the power struggle with Yeltsin.

A formal peace treaty between the two nations is extremely important to the improvement of relations and the easing of military tension between these two nations and other nations in the Far East Asian region. In order to facilitate such a settlement, formulating a solution along the lines of the 1956 Soviet Japanese Joint Declaration, as many officials such as Russian Press Minister Poltoranin has suggested, seems to be the only achievable solution. The fact that both states agreed to this formula once, suggests that they can agree once more. It is unrealistic of the Japanese, however, to demand the return of all four of the disputed islands as it seems unacceptable to the Russians. Instead, the Japanese should settle for the return of Shikotan and the Habomais, with Kunashir and Iturup remaining as Russian territory. With a settlement such as this, each side could claim a kind of political victory. The Japanese victory would be a moral one as well as a political "triumph." Japan would extend its Exclusive Economic Zone, spark better relations with Russia and claim that the Russian return of these islands vindicates the injustices done to them by the Soviets in the second World War. Russia on the other hand could also

claim a victory. By returning the two islands to Japan, it would be viewed internationally as acquiescing and compromising for the cause of world peace and prosperity. Additionally, it would reap the benefits of Japanese economic and technological assistance. Militarily, it would retain control of all the straits through the chain and could explain the move at home as "honoring the 1956 Joint Declaration" made with Japan by the communist regime, thus taking the wind out of the sails of the communist hard liners.[Figure 10] Japan would be hard pressed to reject such a proposal since it might be seen by the international community as an equitable solution and its rejection might be viewed as a greedy economic power play by Japan. The Russians could make the solution even more attractive by establishing Shikotan, Habomai, and Kunashir as a "demilitarized zone" and allowing free access to Japanese visitors who would like to visit the islands. This removal of military forces from Kunashir by the Russians would display good faith, but not jeopardize defense interests since Iturup would remain manned by the military and Kunashir could easily be remanned in event of regional conflict.

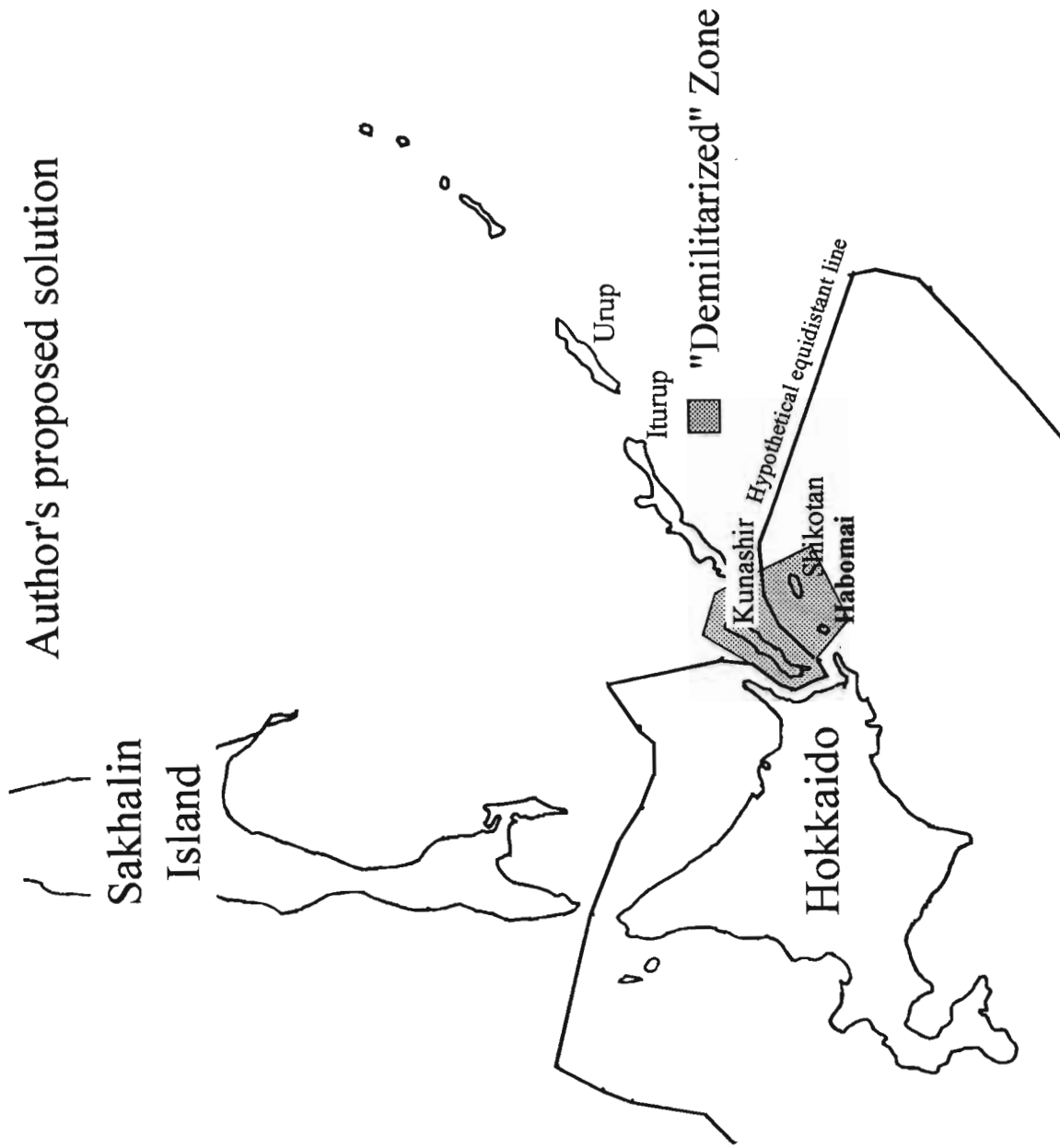
As the dispute now stands, neither side will give in and Russia does not seem to desire negotiating from a position of weakness. If the Japanese feel that they can take advantage of this situation, they have miscalculated. Russia needs assistance and desires assistance, but will not be treated as a "weak neighbor", a fact made clear by President Yeltsin at the Vancouver Summit with President Clinton. If Japan truly desires a peace treaty with Russia and an end to this dispute, Tokyo must be willing to compromise on the issue, realize what the Russians feel is at stake here, and

accept a solution based on the 1956 declaration. This solution was, at least superficially, acceptable to the two nations during a period of cold war diplomacy and escalating tensions in the Asian Far East. Now, in an era of cooperation and mutual friendship, this solution should be workable and acceptable to the Russian people as well as the Japanese.



# Figure 10

Author's proposed solution



## Notes

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