

Opinion Poll Report**Russian and Korean students stand against Japan's territorial claims***Prokopenko Sergey Viktorovich**Institute of Management and Social Studies, Sakhalin State University, Russia*

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It is known that the first official international boundary treaty between Russian Empire and Japan was Shimoda Trade and Boundary Agreement signed on November the 25th (February the 7th) 1855. Under this treaty the border between Japan and Russian Empire was demarcated as a line between Urup and Iturup (Etorofu) islands. All the Kuril Islands to the north of Urup were announced to be Russian; but Iturup and the islands to the south of it - to be Japanese. Sakhalin Island was not marked off. Few Japanese settlements in Sakhalin were mostly seasonal and located in the southernmost of the island.

The Treaty between Russian Empire and Japan that documented a new border between the countries was signed on May the 27th (June 8th) 1875 in St. Petersburg. Japan withdrew its claims to Sakhalin Island; Russia remised to Japan the islands from Urup to Shumshu.

On January 27th (February 9th) 1904 Japan treacherously attacked Russia without declaring a war. Following the results of the war Japan annexed the southern part of Sakhalin till the 50th parallel. This was fixed in Portsmouth Peace Treaty on August 23th (September 5th) 1905. Japanese treacherous attack on Russia resulted in Japan's loss of right to refer to the treaties of 1855 and 1875.

Furthermore, in 1918 Japan violated Portsmouth Peace Treaty. Japanese military forces occupied the northern part of Sakhalin Island. Japanese military forces and civil affairs government left northern Sakhalin only in 1925.

Then World War II began and militarist Japan entered the alliance with Hitlerite Germany. The results of WWII are well known. Japan as an aggressor country enacted military atrocities and displayed barbarity towards civilians of the occupied territories was defeated by allied Powers. On September the 2nd Japan signed the Act of unconditional surrender. The victor countries defined the territory to be under the jurisdiction of Japan. Japan forfeited all the Kurils. This was fixed in Memorandum of Allied Powers Commander-in-Chief in January 1946. Furthermore, 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty confirmed this statement.

The USSR didn't sign San Francisco Peace Treaty for a variety of reasons. But Japan signed it, so accepted the annexation of all the Kurils in favor of the USSR.

After the long negotiations on October 19th the countries signed USSR-Japan Joint Declaration which resumed diplomatic relations. The Declaration confirmed that the countries would continue Peace treaty negotiations. (Although it's not clear to the authors for whatever reason a peace treaty should be concluded if the state of war is terminated and the diplomatic relations are resumed). The Declaration displayed the USSR consent to give the island of Shikotan and Smaller Kuril Group under Japan's jurisdiction after the Peace treaty ratification. The islands were mentioned to be Russian territory. That was a kind of a goodwill gesture. The USSR Government probably counted on Japan pursuing the good neighbor policy towards the USSR. However the American forces were deployed on the Japanese territory. Moreover, in 1960 the USA and Japan signed the Security treaty against the USSR.

Thus, the international situation in this part of our planet was significantly changed, and handing the islands to Japan, who had close allied ties with the US pursuing aggressive anti-Soviet policy, could have a negative effect on the USSR national defense capability in Pacific Region.

The USSR notified Japan about it in the Note of January the 27th, 1960. Japanese government responded by the Note of February the 5th 1960 stating that Japan would reclaim not only Smaller Kuril Archipelago (i.e. Shikotan and Habomai), but the other "indigenously Japanese territories" too.

It was the beginning of Japan's refusing to keep the San Francisco Treaty in terms of territorial limits stated by victor countries World War II Allies. Since 1960 till 1990 Japan was pursuing a cartographic war. The maps with all the Kurils and the half of Sakhalin colored as Japanese were published and distributed not only within schools in schoolbooks but wherever they can be, including the USSR border territories.

After the negotiations on April the 18th 1991 in Tokyo USSR President M. Gorbachev and Japanese officials signed the joint Soviet-Japanese statement which declared the existing territory demarcation problem. On October 18th 1993 in Tokyo President B. Eltsin signed the Declaration on Russian-Japanese relations. Both declarations stated nearly the same. Nevertheless both declarations were not reviewed and approved by Russian Federation Parliament. Moreover, no improvement had been achieved in the relations between our countries. Russian President B. Eltsin expressed willingness to sign Peace treaty with Japan till the end of 2000. However he retired on December the 30th 1999. Before that he asked all Russian citizens to forgive him. Since that time Japan and Russia have had periodic meetings/

consultations and negotiations on different issues, including the issue of signing the treaty between our countries.

The question is – what kind of treaty. Japan managed to put Japanese names of Kuril islands in negotiation vocabulary (i.e. Habomai instead of Smaller Kuril Archipelago) and claims for return of 1956 Declaration though it can't be the basis for negotiations due to above mentioned circumstances. It is clear that Japan has kept discussing the Kuril-Island question during international negotiations between our countries does not look optimistic in terms of our future relations. The authors were interested to know Sakhalin State University students opinion on that issue.

In parallel with such endeavor, we planned to read opinions of Korean students enrolled at Seoul National University on the issue of Japanese territorial claims to Dokdo Island (hereafter Dokdo) which has been under sovereignty of the Republic of Korea (hereafter Korea) for a long period of time. Dokdo consists of two main islands, Dongdo (East Island) and Seodo (West Island), and 89 surrounding islets, and total area is 187,554m². Historically viewed, an old record in Geography Section of the Annals of King Sejong's Reign (1454) clearly stated that "the two islands, Usan (Dokdo) and Mureung (Ulleungdo), are in the middle of the sea to the east of Uljin county." Korean government has clarified its position on Dokdo stating that "Dokdo is an integral part of Korea's territory historically, geographically, and under international law." The Japanese government deprived Korea of her sovereignty for over forty years, in stages culminating in the annexation of the entire Korean peninsula in 1910. Following the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1904, the Shimane Prefectural Government alleged that it had incorporated Dokdo into its jurisdiction in 1905. Therefore, Dokdo became the first victim of Japan's aggression against the Korean peninsula.

Stated in this way, we also examined attitudes of Russian students towards the issue of Korean Dokdo and of Korean students towards Russian Kuril Islands for comparative purposes. Over the last decades, we have witnessed aggravation between some neighboring countries. The reason is not only because of economy complications, but also because of the state's boundary issues which have been closely connected with territorial frustrations. We conducted a multi-year research project on the attitudes of youth and students at both Sakhalin State University and Seoul National University towards the Japanese territorial claims on Kuril Islands in the Russian Federation (hereafter Russia) and Dokdo in Korea.

Immediate after the unconditional surrender of Japan at the final stage of WWII, Japan never raised any territorial issues or claims on those territories. It was presumably because the Japanese government recognized the responsibility for war crime they had committed in South East Asia, Far East and Pacific Region during the WW II. But alongside with its economic

growth, the country hardened questioning and even started to request the territories to be returned.

The Japanese government officials only intensified a rhetoric towards their adjacent countries prolonging the so-called “cartography war” which was started by Japan in the 1960s. The core idea is pretty simple. Japanese school textbooks show the only one outlook of Dokdo ownership by Korea and state that a part of the Kuril Islands belong to the former USSR, now Russian Federation. To the mind of the Japanese young generation, it is an unfair act that needs to be amended (i.e., reclaim those territories back). Then, the “cartography war” was pushed to the next level where on all maps the mentioned territories were painted in Japanese national colours and such printed production was distributed to adjacent countries. The last stage seems to be the ownership view distribution.

Earlier this year in March and April, the clearly intended propaganda literature was distributed by Japanese diplomats to Russian people in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. The Russian-Japanese state boundary was deliberately disfigured. Regrettably, that is not the only one example of such production distribution in Russia.

To explore youngsters’ perceptions and attitudes towards the Japanese territorial claims, we carried out a questionnaire survey with students at Seoul National University (256 participants) and Sakhalin State University (270 participants) in spring 2018. Results clearly show that the vast majority of students tend to think that there exists absolutely no justifiable legal basis for Japanese claims to both Korea and Russia. In the following tables, we present some of major findings.

Legitimacy for Territorial Claims

Table 1. “Do you think Japanese territorial claims on Kuril Islands are legal?”

Responses	Seoul National U. , %	Sakhalin State U. , %
Yes	4,3	9,3
No	18,4	74,8
Not sure	66,4	15,9
Not interested	10,9	-

It is absolutely clear that the vast majority of Russian college students do not even doubt the legal rights of Russia on the Kuril Islands.

Table 2. “Do you think Japanese territorial claims on Dokdo are legal?”

Responses	Seoul National U. , %	Sakhalin State U. , %
Yes	4,7	2,6
No	73,4	37,8
Not sure	21,9	59,6

The same picture also can be seen among the Korean students. Only a small proportion of Koreans think that Japanese claims have legitimacy.

Tables 1 and 2 show that two-thirds of Korean students were not sure about the legitimacy of Japanese claims on the Kuril Islands, and that almost 60% of Russian students exhibited their lack of knowledge on the territorial issue of Dokdo. It is quite understandable that the students of both countries know their own history much better than about adjacent or neighbouring countries.

Initiator for territorial disputes

Table 3. “Who do you think is an initiator for the territorial dispute on Kuril Islands?”

Responses	Seoul National U.	Sakhalin State U. , %
Japan	31,3	84,9
Russia	7,4	2,2
Both countries	10,2	-
Third parties	0,8	-
Not sure	50,4	12,9

Table 4. “Who do you think is an initiator for the territorial dispute on Dokdo?”

Responses	Seoul National U. , %	Sakhalin State U. , %
Japan	57,4	50,7
Korea	9,8	7,1
Both countries	15,6	-
Third parties	4,7	-
Not sure	12,5	42,2

The majority (84.9%) Russian students responded that Japan initiated territorial disputes on Kuril Islands while 57 percent of Koreans students thought that Japan is an initiator of the territorial disputes on Dokdo.

Necessity for Alliance for Territorial Disputes

Table 5. “Do you think Russia and Korea should make an alliance in pushing back the Japanese territorial claims?”

Responses	Seoul National U.	Sakhalin State U. , %
Yes, definitely	60,5	36,7
No	10,2	27,0
Not sure	29,3	36,7

It is clear that the readiness for common action against Japanese claims is almost twice higher for the Korean than Russian students. About 30% of Korean students are not sure about this issue while a bit more Russians students do not show their confidence on such action. Thus it can be concluded that with enhancing the information about Japanese territorial claims groundlessness and illegitimacy for both Dokdo and Kuril Islands we can expect significant increase in the number of students ready for some united protest actions.

Table 6. “Do you think youth and students of Korea and Russia should participate in protesting against Japanese territorial claims?”

Responses	Seoul National U. , %	Sakhalin State U. , %
Yes	60,5	34,8
No	10,2	31,9
Not sure	29,3	33,3

Overall, the poll showed negative attitudes of both Korean and Russian students towards the Japanese territorial claims. College students in both countries do not accept or recognize those claims. Understanding of the claims illegitimacy and groundlessness prevails not only among students but people in society at large. Seoul National University students appeared to be more ready for the protests against the territorial claims. The negative outcome is that the youth is poorly informed on Japanese territorial claims on the neighboring and adjacent countries.

Japanese propaganda activities facilitated negative reaction in Russia while damaging the relationship between the two countries, and thus, made difficult the search for mutually suitable agreement. In connection with all the aforesaid, it is irrational and counterproductive for Japan to act recklessly and enhance societal pressure. This can cause Russian people to position during negotiations to become only tougher.

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