

**1992 SUMMER SEMINAR:
WHAT IS A LEADER?**

The North Pacific Program

In 1985, we established the North Pacific Program at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in an attempt to focus scholarly attention on the distinctive political, commercial, and social interaction of the people who inhabit the vast reaches of the North Pacific region. This area stretches from San Diego to Shanghai, encompassing the Pacific coastal domain of the United States, Canada, Russia, both North and South Korea, China, and Japan. It is a geographic concept joined by the sea, forged as much by conflict as by commerce and cooperation, and offering incalculable opportunity for economic growth and development as well as dreadful risks of misunderstanding and confrontation.

Historically, the North Pacific has not been viewed as a regional unit. Leaders of the massive continental powers--Russia, Canada, and the United States--have focused more on the courts and conference halls of Europe than the commonality of their Pacific experience. Japan--once cloistered in self-imposed isolation, then emboldened in a furious bid for development and regional domination, later humbled and shrunken by military defeat, now enriched and empowered--is entirely surrounded by the Pacific, but is perceived by others in the North Pacific more often as a competitor than as a partner. China and Korea--both divided, both the objects of foreign competition--have witnessed hostile forces arrive via the Pacific and are only now cultivating more amicable relations with erstwhile foes whose shores face the same sea.

The aim of our Program is to accentuate the mutuality of life along the North Pacific, to foster a sense of similarity, and to highlight the potential for peaceable interaction--political and commercial--within the community formed by the northern oceanic waters. To do this, I have offered courses at The Fletcher School that illuminate the history of the region and we have invited speakers from the various North Pacific nations to visit and lecture at the school. The highlight of the North Pacific Program is our annual summer seminar which draws students, scholars, as well as business and political leaders from as many as possible of the North Pacific nations to one site where they live and learn together for ten days or so. Each year, the seminar participants focus their studies on a particular theme used as a vehicle for generating discussion and mutual education.

For five years, beginning in 1985, we held the seminar in Hokkaido, Japan and addressed themes directly related to the role of the North Pacific, including:

- The North Pacific: The New Center of the World?
- The Challenge of the North Pacific:
Growth and Opportunities for the Future
- Negotiating Behavior in the North Pacific
Patterns, Problems, and Emerging New Contexts
- Economic Development in the North Pacific
- Trade and Investment in the North Pacific

In 1990, we accepted an invitation to hold the seminar in Vladivostok, USSR. In addition to shifting the conference site, we shifted the focus of the seminar from the "applied" topics of the first five years to a more conceptual matter: The City in North Pacific History. This theme proved to be sufficiently provocative that we retained it as the topic of the 1991 seminar held in Seoul, Korea.

In 1992, we were invited to return to Vladivostok, but by then it was Vladivostok, Russia--the Soviet Union was no longer. A *propos* of the tumultuous changes that resulted in the disintegration of the former communist regime and which continue to wrack Russia and other former Soviet republics, the theme of the 1992 seminar was: Leadership in the North Pacific.

VLADIVOSTOK: THE CONFERENCE SETTING

Vladivostok is situated at the southern tip of Primorie (the Russian Maritime Territory). Like Hong Kong, Vancouver, and San Francisco, Vladivostok is a city of mountains and water, islets and bays, criss-crossing ferries and bustling port life. Unlike other Pacific harbors, however, Vladivostok became closed for much of its 132 year history. Founded in 1860 as a military outpost, Vladivostok was the home port of the Soviet Pacific Fleet and officially a "closed" city until 1992. While it is less than fifty miles east of the Chinese border, about eighty miles northeast of the North Korean border, and approximately 450 miles across the Sea of Japan from Sapporo on the island of Hokkaido, Vladivostok remained isolated, fortified, and fearful of the outside world.

By 1992, a new regime had asserted itself. Vladivostok is now open, eager, and ambitiously encouraging new ties with neighbors from far and near who are willing to help the city--indeed the entire Maritime Territory--develop new links for trade, development, and increased prosperity and cultural interchange.

As in 1990, the North Pacific Seminar was held in a commodious group of buildings located at Sanatornaya station, some twenty minutes bus ride from the center of the city. Much of the compound was built in the aftermath of the 1974 Soviet-American summit between Presidents Brezhnev and Ford and was used as a "state dacha"--a peaceful, rural retreat for state and party leaders. Now, it is run by the City of Vladivostok as a conference center. Ensnconed on a gentle, wooded hillside, the center comprises several imposing, white marble structures, a central Hall of Negotiations (where the daily conference sessions, most meals, and much evening revelry took place), and clusters of wood frame houses surrounded by carefully swept paths and bountiful herb and vegetable gardens. At the foot of the hill, across the railway tracks leading to town, lie the calm waters of Amur Bay.

LEADERSHIP: THE CONFERENCE THEME

Broadly, the aim of the 1992 North Pacific Seminar was to continue what earlier seminars had done with such success: to bring together students and scholars from the entire North Pacific

region for a period of mutual education and exploration--a process that takes form as much outside the classroom and conference halls as within them. For the first time, we recruited a group of businessmen to join us. Four of them constituted our "Business Cohort."

The substantive focus of this seminar was "Leadership in the North Pacific" and students from The Fletcher School had spent the spring semester of the preceding academic year in a course in which each examined the life and role of a specific leader from the region. I urged these students to consider what makes a leader. Failure in international leadership appears to be a central concern for inhabitants of the North Pacific, as it is for people elsewhere. Are qualities of leadership universal and fungible across cultural boundaries or specific to particular times and communities? The seminar explored definitions of leadership in a multi-cultural context by analyzing the characteristics of successful international leaders. Students were encouraged to consider:

- Who are great international leaders and why?
- What are some models and concepts of leadership?
- Does leadership transcend time and place?
- Can leadership qualities be learned or developed?

I am not satisfied that we have yet found the answers to these questions but we plan to continue to explore them.

--John Curtis Perry