

**THE FLETCHER SUMMER SEMINAR  
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**FOREWORD**

1994 presented fresh challenges to the North Pacific Program. We wanted to return to Russia and I have always wanted to take the group to Kamchatka. But the Pacific Far East seemed this year to lie beyond our grasp. In part this was because of the cost of getting there, but also the current troubled condition of Russia made it impossible to make firm arrangements in such a remote part of the country. We therefore settled upon Moscow. Thanks to the advice and help of Drs. Ekaterina Egorova and Constantine

Pleshakov, veteran participants in our North Pacific endeavors, we were able to establish ourselves in reasonable comfort just outside the capital city.

Our total complement was 23, one of the smallest overseas seminars we have had. The smallness of the group was a good thing, adding greatly to the social and intellectual intimacy of the group. I think I have never experienced a group who liked one another as much as this one did.

John Curtis Perry  
Director, North Pacific Program  
The Fletcher School

#### **LECTURE SUMMARIES**

The following are synopses of the lectures presented at the 1994 North Pacific Seminar. Lectures are presented in the order in which they were given during the Seminar.

#### **JOHN CURTIS PERRY**

#### **THE CLASH BETWEEN OCEANIC AND CONTINENTAL STATES**

*Profile of J.C. Perry. Professor Perry, our "Papa Bear" during the week, opened the seminar with a macro-historic exploration of some of the trends of the 500-year history of the North Pacific. His focus upon the oceanic-continental state duality often resurfaced during our later discussions of individual North Pacific leaders.*

Looking at the whole of North Pacific history, I would like to explore two themes with you: the centrality of China, and the convergence of oceanic states with continental states.

#### **THE CENTRALITY OF CHINA**

One is hard-pressed to find a tradition of unity in the history of the North Pacific. Until recent times, the Pacific acted as a barrier, not a binder. When one searches for centrality, he or she finds it in the case of China, which dominated the East Asian world for nearly two millennia, and which remained a center for Great Power rivalry even after its decline in modern times. Interestingly, this observation, presents us with a paradox: China, historically a continental state, has formed the unifying spirit for the oceanic world of the North Pacific.

The Chinese polity, so elegant, wealthy and sophisticated, was also self-satisfied and self-absorbed. There was almost no international outreach, save for the continental push to the South, and China spawned no explorers of the Pacific. Trade, loathed by the bureaucrats, was riverine and coastal.

#### **THE ATLANTIC CHALLENGE**

Yet this model of durability proved unable to withstand the juxtaposition of the nadir of the dynastic cycle with the

onslaught of the Atlantic world in the 19th Century. Lacking the material means for self-transformation, China entered an era of passivity. The Europeans confronted China with two threats which were unprecedented in China's historical experience with foreigners: All previous challenges to China's military security had come over the land. Now, however, China faced a new, oceanic threat.

Moreover, the Europeans challenged China's intellectual security. The Sino-centric system of international relations clashed with the nation-state concept, which presupposed equality among nations. China lacked the European genius for finding practical applications for theoretical discoveries, and also did not possess the pioneering spirit which typified the explorers from Atlantic.

### **BRITAIN: THE OCEANIC KING**

By the 19th Century, the island nation Britain had emerged as the implausible king of European expansion. In contrast to France, whose continental distractions had thwarted its oceanic ambitions, Britain was removed from the destructive wars across the Channel.

The quintessential commercial state, Britain was able to build and lose a pre-Industrial Revolution empire based in the North Atlantic, then create an even greater empire based around the Indian Ocean.

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With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1860, the United States ceased to be a commercial oceanic state.

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Culturally Britain possessed many surprising similarities to China. Both were class-ridden societies whose mandarins opposed trade. Britain, like China, did not proselytize, but viewed other peoples with a lofty indifference. It chose to adopt a pragmatic, non-ideological, commercial approach which perhaps may be linked to Britain's oceanic character.

In contrast to Britain, Russia, the United States and Japan possessed more than commercial interests in China. Each of the three dreamed of shaping the inevitable modernization of the Middle Kingdom.

### **THE RUSSIAN OCEANIC EXPERIMENT**

Russia, the largest Asian country and possessor of the longest Pacific coastline, believed itself to be the inheritor of the universal empires of Rome and Byzantium. We see these exceptionalist notions surface in Russia's attitudes toward Asia.

The trauma of the brutal Mongol yoke from which the Muscovites had emerged taught Russians that Asia represented a source of danger, not of possibility. Accordingly, Russia had a unique mission to stand as a protective barrier between the Asian hordes and Europe. On the other hand, some Russians envisioned a positive role for Russia as a bride between Asia and Europe.

As Russians swept across Siberia toward the Pacific and the Americas, they carried this ambivalence toward Asia with them.

Until 1867, Russia remained the only Power to span the North Pacific. But Russian America proved to be abortive, a failed attempt by this continental state to create an oceanic empire.

#### **THE UNITED STATES' MISSION**

While the Russians saw the Asia Pacific as a distant source of danger and fear, Americans regarded it as a frontier of opportunity. America's first interests in the Pacific and China were commercial. But the United States also brought ideological interests to the Pacific, particularly after the seizure of half of Mexico and the acquisition of Oregon and Washington in the 1850s. Americans were the first to assert that the Pacific was destined to become the center of the world. And the United States, they felt, would inevitably guide Asia toward this future.

Ferociously optimistic that others would accept and adopt American notions about religion and politics, the U.S. sought first to Christianize and later democratize China with a missionary zeal that carries over into today's efforts to give the Chinese an American sense of what human rights ought to be.

#### **JAPAN'S FATAL FLAW**

After the U.S. forced Japan to rejoin the comity of nations in the 1850s, Japan began to modernize and develop as an oceanic state. By 1900, Japan was the Great Britain of East Asia. It had become the owner of a major battle fleet and a large merchant marine. Modernization had thrust Japan into the Pacific to an extent unprecedented in its history.

But all of this development was based upon a fatal flaw in Japanese grand strategy. Japan was torn between its ambitions in Asia and its oceanic thrust, a duality it proved unable to sustain. Unlike the British in Asia, the Japanese desired a territorial Empire. Japan had a mission on the Continent, perceiving itself not as master, but as benevolent liberator of Asia, both from the outworn Confucian modes of the past and from Atlantic imperialism. In particular, the Japanese had a vision of modernizing China as a supporting member of a greater Japan, a vision for which most Chinese had rather little enthusiasm.

The year 1902, when Tokyo and London negotiated the Anglo-Japanese alliance, stands as a watershed year in North Pacific history. It marks Japan's coming of age and Britain's withdrawal from the North Pacific world. The triangle of Russia-Japan-Britain--maneuvering over China--became Russia, Japan and the U.S.

The two great Anglo-German wars in 1914 and 1939, in which oceanic states triumphed over continental states, destroyed the North Atlantic monopoly over North Pacific affairs. Indeed, the Korean War marked the last time that the Atlantic world would provoke events in the North Pacific. The communist victory in China brought a new dimension to the traditional North Pacific triangle by making it a quadrilateral with the U.S., Russia, China, and Japan at the corners.

#### **THE MODERN ERA: THE ASCENDANCY OF THE OCEANIC STATE**

China's increasing role in the North Pacific need scarcely be mentioned. Much of its economic success carries an oceanic

character. Since 1949, its major continental relationships--with the Soviet Union, India, and Vietnam--have been sterile and unhappy. The ocean, on the other hand, has been a source of opportunity for contemporary China, providing linkages to China's oceanic neighbors and to the capital, technology, and business skills which rest in the hands of the estimated 50 million overseas Chinese who reside in foreign lands.

Japan also has carved a new career as an oceanic state. Defeat in the Great Pacific War severed its ties with mainland Asia and the American occupation and military-political umbrella freed Japan to construct a new sort of oceanic state. It is no coincidence that shipbuilding was the first Japanese industry to reach world primacy after World War II.

In contrast, Russia is currently suffering the penalties of isolation. True, the Soviet Union developed a far-reaching blue water fleet and a substantial fishing industry. But the Soviet Union failed to enter the global commercial oceanic network.

The United States, although a huge consumer of ocean-borne commerce, has ceased to be a carrier of these goods. Militarily, of course, ever since Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet sailed around the world in 1908, the United States has been a great naval power. But the US now possesses more warships than merchant ships. Indeed, although we built merchant fleets on demand during the two World Wars, one might say that the U.S. ceased to be an oceanic state with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1860.

South Korea is a remarkable instance of the new oceanic state. First Japanese colonialism, then the Cold War severed Korea's intense continental attachment to China. Since 1945, South Korea's success has been export driven. Furthermore, Seoul's oceanic thrust has imported new values of democracy and capitalism, a process heightened by large-scale emigration to the U.S. Korea, once one of the world's poorest nations, now aspires to become one of the top ten richest in the coming century. Perhaps Korea's exploitation of its maritime frontier could serve as model for other nations who seek to join the ranks of the developed world.

**CONSTANTINE V. PLESHAKOV**  
**GEOPOLITICS AND THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST**

*Dr. Pleshkov received his Ph.D. in History in 1987 from the Institute of USA and Canada at the Russian Academy of Sciences. A vital organizer of this year's Seminar, "Kostya" served as our cultural guide throughout the week, providing a constant source of information, insight and humor. Here, Dr. Pleshakov continued in the macrohistoric vein by discussing Moscow's 20th Century geostrategic policies in the Russian Far East.*

Geopolitical strategic thinking focuses upon the control over space. By the end of the Second World War, Stalin had acquired direct military, political, and economic control over the space to Moscow's West. He now longed to control the Soviet Far East as well.

Stalin was fully aware of the history of difficulties Czarist Russia had encountered in its previous attempts to carve a sphere of influence along the Pacific. Russia and the Soviet Union were continental powers, but the Far East could only be controlled by a sea power. Russia's failure during the Russo-Japanese War confirmed the fact that even though Russia possessed territory in the East, it failed to control this area. Stalin intended to change this situation by building a Pacific fleet, and at war's end he demanded and received the Kurile islands, Southern Sakhalin, and bases in China. After 1949, Stalin attempted to carve out an even larger sphere of influence in the Far East by maintaining indirect political control over Beijing, and by acquiring control over Manchuria.

#### **THE KOREAN WAR**

Geopolitical concerns over the control of space provoked the Korean War. Stalin and Mao recognized that South Korea represented the place where the sea powers could oppose and launch an attack upon the Soviet Union and China. Stalin felt that bringing the Korean Peninsula into his web would provide the Communist states with a measure of security. Instead, the Korean War was a geopolitical disaster. The presence of American troops on Korean soil increased Moscow's feeling of insecurity for the next four decades.

#### **KHRUSHCHEV AND MAO**

After he came to power, Khrushchev realized that the death of Stalin had introduced ideological shifts as well as fundamental geopolitical movements into the Far Eastern picture. The indirect control over China which Stalin had enjoyed was no longer acceptable to Mao. Seeking to maintain political influence by forging a relationship based upon equality, Khrushchev returned control over Chinese lands, bases, and mines to Beijing. But the strategy failed, and by the time of the second Quemoy crisis in 1958, Moscow had lost control over China. The relationship deteriorated so rapidly that by the early 1960s, China began challenging the Soviet Union's territorial claims, thereby transforming the Sino-Soviet split from an ideological conflict into a battle over space as well.

#### **AMBASSADOR THOMAS R. PICKERING THE RUSSIA WE SEE TODAY**

*A graduate of the Fletcher School (1954), where he met his wife, Alice, Ambassador Pickering arrived in Moscow after serving as U.S. ambassador to India, Israel, and to the United Nations. He spoke to us in general terms about the current situation of Russian reforms, and of Russian-American relations. Later in the week, the Ambassador and Mrs. Pickering gave a reception for the Seminar participants at their residence, the beautiful and historic Spaso House.*

#### **GOOD NEWS IN THE ECONOMY**

You have come to Moscow during an exciting time of change, and one which we cautiously hope will be a period of quiet economic and

political consolidation. Russia's economic progress over the past several months has been remarkable, particularly in comparison to the predictions of gloom and doom which followed last December's elections. The key macroeconomic indicator, the monthly inflation rate, has been wrestled down to 6%. Negotiations between Moscow and the IMF have set a target of 3% per month which, if reached, will trigger nearly \$6 billion in aid by the end of the year. Parliament's passage of President Yeltsin's disciplined budget is also a promising sign, although many groups, such as the military and agricultural sectors, are dissatisfied with the harsh cutbacks they will face over the coming year.

#### **BUT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES REMAIN**

The bad news on the economic front is the large fall in production, particularly in the defense industries, which at one point produced from 40% to 60% of the former Soviet Union's total output. The economic trauma of restructuring extends even further into the social fabric of the Russian people because the Soviets' social safety net was erected by individual enterprises, not by the state itself.

Crime and corruption have moved into the system, although the sense that one has is that the trend is not as bad as Western news accounts would lead you to believe. The crime and corruption picture is hurt by the fact that the whole legislative basis for police work and prosecution lacks a clear set of guidelines for business behavior. President Yeltsin has issued a very tough anti-crime decree which the U.S. hopes will simultaneously rein in corruption and uphold international standards of human rights.

#### **DECEMBER'S ELECTION RESULTS**

During last December's election, a kind of fratricide erupted among the reformist camp, allowing several extremists on both the right and the left to post significant gains. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is perhaps the best known of those on the far right. Since the election, the government has left him alone to hang himself. Happily, he seems to have moved well in that direction. Interestingly, the new Parliament has not resorted to the tactics of direct confrontation with the President which led to the demise of its predecessor, the Supreme Soviet.

#### **US-RUSSIAN RELATIONS**

President Yeltsin has recognized the new currency which nationalist sentiments hold among the Russian people. But in key foreign policy matters, from the Balkans to the Caucasus, the Russian bark appears to be worse than its bite. Having said this, it is important to note that Russia is no longer content to follow the United States' lead, as was the case for nearly two years after the August, 1991 coup attempt. The relationship is now much healthier, with both sides bringing a set of national interests to the table. Moscow has now become more proactive abroad, a change which can be seen, for example, in Russia's recent overtures toward China.

#### **AVOID THE "SON OF CONTAINMENT"**

The big question which foreigners now ponder is which direction Russia will take. Will it continue on its present course toward economic and political integration and cooperation? Or will foreign efforts to fence in Russia erect new walls which create a self-fulfilling prophecy by pushing Russia down the imperialist path once again? Fortunately, the Russian people seem to be dedicated to moving in a positive direction, and we have decided as a country to provide a large amount of assistance to help them get there. It is clear that this will not be a Hollywood script, which runs smoothly forever into the sunset. But there seems to be a consensus among most countries that we now have an historic opportunity to put relations with Russia on an entirely new basis.