

**Report on the 2nd GCOE-SRC Border Studies Summer School:
“Eurasia Border Review: from Northeast Asia to Middle East”
PART 2**

The second GCOE-SRC summer programme once again provided a chance for young scholars and senior professors to discuss some of the most diverse and contentious border issues existing in the world today. Part II of this report focuses on a few of the personal highlights of a week long series of presentations and a field-trip to the borderlands.

One of the unique and most impressive features of this programme is that it allows students from across the world to learn and to share ideas with each other as well as with eminent professors from a range of disciplines and regions. It is a programme that not only helps to promote border studies in Japan but is part of a truly global project that brings together tomorrow's policy makers and academics.

This year the SRC invited one of Russia's top experts on the Asia-Pacific region, Professor Sergei Sevastyanov, who holds the Chair of World Economics at Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service. Professor Sevastyanov also served as captain in the Soviet and Russian navy, which allowed him to present some intriguing insights and experiences. In a wide-ranging and informative talk on Russia and Maritime order he provided not only an academic analysis of contemporary issues in the Pacific region but also some of the perspectives and threat perceptions of the Russian Navy.

His talk illustrated just how the Pacific region matters for Russia and the theoretical and practical aspects of modern Russian national maritime politics. He also provided an analysis of the long term tasks and challenges in achieving maritime security across the Pacific and also in the Arctic. This latter region is of particular interest as recent changes in the natural environment are making this area ever more accessible for both resource extraction and shipping. Over the freezing North Pole, the geopolitics of the region, like the climate, are heating up and this lecture was a chance to get the Russian view of the dynamic changes occurring in the vast oceans to its east and north.

Aside from lectures by senior academics, there was an entire day of the schedule devoted for presentations by the younger scholars attending the programme. As last year, the breadth and depth of the research was impressive and the presentations were divided into three panels. The first focussed on border disputes in Asia and began with the modern history of the border between China and Vietnam. Reflecting the growing importance of India on the world stage, two papers discussed this country's borders. One looked at the border with its great rival to the north, China, and the other concentrated on the many challenges and opportunities that the India-Bangladesh border poses. The other papers in this panel suggested an innovative proposal for a regional security alliance as a way for overcoming some of the issues surrounding Dokdo / Takeshima. The little-known Pamir region on the China-Tajikistan border was also introduced in this session.

After lunch the geographic focus shifted to the fragmentation of Soviet-space and the implications of the collapse of communist regimes in this region. Young researchers from Estonia, the Republic of Adygea (Russian Federation), Finland and Spain could present from direct experience of the reconfiguration of Soviet-space. This panel featured such topics as the European Union's role in Central Asia, the Estonian-Russian border, stability in the North Caucasus, and the final status of Kosovo. The closing session was the most geographically diverse with case studies drawn from the Sino-Soviet border; an ambitious proposal for energy security and cooperation in South Asia; and an African view of territorial disputes in the Asia-Pacific.

All of these presentations provoked wide-ranging discussion with plenty of questions. As the young scholars got to know each other during the programme, the debates proved to be both lively and friendly. The question and answer sessions allowed the students to receive constructive feedback and useful comments on their research. Such comments and analysis are invaluable for developing and improving research ideas and themes for Master's theses and PhD dissertations.

Towards the end of the programme came a field-trip to the borderlands which provided perhaps the most interesting and memorable moments of the programme. After five days discussing and studying borders in the classroom the participants came face to face with how a border issue affects people's lives in Nemuro. At first, through local museums, DVDs and presentations, the history of the Japanese-Russian border was introduced. Then this border issue came to life when participants were able to meet directly with the local administration, including the mayor himself, as well as local residents and specialists who had been researching or living on this contested border for the last few decades. Although on the first day of the field trip the actual border was invisible due to bad weather, the atmosphere of these borderlands could still be keenly sensed.

This excursion was not only about study but also an opportunity to appreciate the spectacular nature and landscapes of this region. During the trip, seals, eagles and deer were spotted and many of the participants enjoyed tasting the most delicious crab in Japan! There was also a chance to see the spectacular Rausu geyser and most of the participants could enjoy relaxing in the fresh air and clean water. The weather also improved on the second day allowing the group to glimpse the spectacular Okhotsk Sea and its magnificent islands.

In conclusion, every one left the 2011 programme with first hand experience and a greater understanding of life on the border. At the end of the eight days new insights were gained into a diverse range of border disputes from across the world. This forum allowed a sharing of knowledge and increased understanding of some of the most challenging of the world's border issues. At the same time it provided the training and sharing of expertise for futures scholars and policy makers to try to overcome these seemingly intractable problems.

All the participants expressed their thanks and appreciation to the SRC for carefully planning and bringing together such a unique set of scholars with a truly global background and experience. For both Japanese and foreign students the chance to communicate their ideas and expand connections and networks is an invaluable part of developing into international scholars and policy practitioners. The seeds sown during the last two summer programmes will continue to blossom for many years to come.

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