

## Russia Study Group

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[History of Russia Study Group]

Since the Japan Institute of International Affairs was founded in 1960, research on the Soviet Union/Russia has been a priority within the research on the Communist bloc centered on China and the USSR. Numerous papers reflecting the circumstances at the time were published in "International Affairs" (a periodical launched in JIIA's first year), including East-West summit meetings and disarmament issues, Japan-USSR fishing negotiations, analysis of the Khrushchev administration, the China-USSR dispute, and US-Soviet economic competition. Building on this, JIIA then endeavored to disseminate its research results in international affairs seminars held across Japan at universities and other venues, and in 1968 it began publishing the bulletin "International Affairs Research" featuring papers on China-USSR research by research fellows Fumio Nishimura and Kazuo Mori. In 1971 JIIA even published "Modern Soviet Social Theory" edited by Akira Tsujimura (at the time a professor at the University of Tokyo). Based on subsequent research projects, a series of books were released, starting in 1977 with "Aspects of Soviet Foreign Policy" edited by Tomoyoshi Hirai. A four-year plan was drafted in 1974 to research Soviet political diplomacy, economic industry, and social culture and to publish the results in a three-volume "Modern Soviet Theory." This plan produced "Volume 1: Modern Soviet Economy and Industry" (1976; edited by Fumio Nishimura and Yasuhiko Yoshida), "Volume 2: Modern Soviet Politics and Diplomacy" (1978; edited by Fumio Nishimura and Seijiro Nakazawa), and "Volume 3: Modern Soviet Society and Culture" (1980; edited by Fumio Nishimura and Akira Tsujimura).

Taking over the tasks of the Europe-Asia Society as it was disbanded in 1976, JIIA began publishing "Communism and International Politics" on a regular basis, and the institute has retained a solid reputation both in Japan and overseas as a key center in Japan for research on the Soviet Union, China and other communist countries. The oldest Soviet Union Study Group reports still on file at JIIA cover those times: "Analysis and Prospects of the USSR's Middle East and Africa Policies" (FY1979-1980; Akio Kimura et al.), "The Soviet Union as a Global Power" (FY1980-1981; Akinori Kikuchi et al.), and "Soviet Power Assessment Project" (FY1980-1981; Hiroshi Kato, Haruki Tanba, et al.).

To commemorate JIIA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary the following year, JIIA in 1984 established a Center for Soviet Studies to further systematic research on the Soviet Union and East European countries and to engage in wide-ranging exchange and development in research on the Soviet Union both inside and outside Japan. This sparked the creation of a number of Soviet Union/Eastern Europe study groups: the Soviet Foreign and Military Affairs Study Group led by Hiroshi Kimura, Professor, Hokkaido University ("The Soviet Union's Asia Policy – Past and Present"), the Soviet Domestic and Economic Affairs Study Group led by Kenzo Kiga, Professor Emeritus, Keio Gijuku University ("Domestic and Economic Issues in the Soviet Union under the Chernenko Administration"), and the East European Economic Affairs Study Group led by Tsuneaki Sato, Professor, Yokohama City University ("Economic Policy in East European Countries and Medium-term Performance Prospects"). Since the Center's establishment, research findings have not simply been compiled into reports but also more broadly publicized through the regular publication of "Soviet Studies," giving the Center a key role within Soviet studies in Japan. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Center was renamed the Center for Russian Studies and its periodical accordingly renamed "Russian Studies." This periodical also developed into book form from this time, resulting in the publication of "Politics in Post-Communist Russia: From Yeltsin to Putin" (by Toshihiko Ueno), "New Developments in Russian Foreign Policy Since 9/11" (by Hiroaki Matsui) and "The Economies of Russia and East Europe: Progress in the Transition to Market Economies" (edited by Yoshiaki Nishimura). The Center's findings are now released as study group reports and special issues of "International Affairs" as JIIA's Russian study groups carry on an unbroken tradition.

[FY2008-2009 Russian Study Group: Research Overview]

Research topic: Policy Decisions in Russia: The Impact of Political Forces on Policy Decisions

Russia has gained a prominent presence lately across numerous realms, including foreign relations, economics, security and energy development. Despite the influence of Russia's various policies on the rest of the world, though, insufficient light has been shed on Russia's policy decision-making structure, the processes by which these policies are selected and the organizations and people exercising actual power in this decision making. A unique tandem administration featuring Prime Minister Putin and President Medvedev came into power in 2008, and there have been growing calls for a concise elucidation of the truths behind Russian policy decision making.

To approach as closely as possible the underlying truths of Russia's policy decision making

structure, the Study Group is attempting to analyze in a multifaceted fashion the present policy decision making process for domestic political, diplomatic, military and economic issues and to generalize this analysis into the historical background. This is an extremely ambitious research project being boldly undertaken by experts from various fields that will look at issues of extraordinary importance but of great difficulty to assess – including policy decision making by the Putin-Medvedev administration, involvement in the military's decision making during the conflict with Georgia, the internal workings of the military-industrial complex, and the influence of the "siloviki" – as well as the policy decision making process on economic issues (e.g., policy changes surrounding WTO accession and foreign direct investment regulations) that are in fact the focus of the greatest attention.

[Findings so far]

This Study Group was established in April 2008. Six Study Group meetings were held in FY2008 at which discussions were held on the research conducted by the group members and the reports prepared in their respective areas. The results were compiled into a report at the end of FY2008 that stands as an interim report. Dedicated research is underway in FY2009 to further the research of the previous fiscal year and to produce the Group's final output, and six Study Group meetings have already been held. Some of the Group members made a research visit to Russia, and their findings were also presented at the Study Group meetings. A report comprising the culmination of two years of research will be prepared and submitted at the end of March 2010.

Eight major research results have been announced thus far: (1) modeling of the Putin administration's policy decision making structure, (2) elucidation of the roles of "siloviki" groups from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Federal Security Service, etc., in the Putin and Medvedev administrations' policy decision making structures, (3) analysis of the decision making structure for economic policies, especially policy changes toward WTO accession and of the disputes between ministries/agencies in the process of passing foreign capital restriction laws, (4) identification of the military elites having an impact on policy decision making during the conflict with Georgia, and elucidation of the revival of the defense industry under government leadership, (5) analysis of the influence of the Russian President's office on the legislative process and the foreign affairs policy making process, and of the continuity with the Soviet Union's foreign policy, (6) explication of the policy process surrounding the establishment of Russia's NPO Act, (7) explanation of the impact of Russia's elites as a whole on policy making, and (8) elucidation of policy making pertaining to the Subterranean Resources Law.

[Study Group Members]

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