

CONFERENCES

JAPAN AND SERBIA: REGIONAL COOPERATION AND BORDER ISSUES – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

On 9-10 September 2010, the Institute of International Politics and Economics (IIPE) organized the international conference *Japan and Serbia: Regional Cooperation and Border Issues – A Comparative Analysis*. This conference was a part of the international round table *Japan and Serbia in a Foreseeable Future*, which the IIPE organizes in cooperation with the leading universities in the field of social sciences in Japan and the Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Serbia.

The participants in the opening session of the conference were as follows: Duško Dimitrijević, Director of the IIPE, who delivered a welcome speech; Viktor Nedović, Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, who delivered an opening speech on scientific cooperation between Japan and Serbia, and H.E. Toshio Tsunozaki, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Serbia.

The conference consisted of three working sessions.

The agenda of the first session was placed within the framework of the title *Border Issues as an Obstacle for Regional Cooperation – Theory and Practice*. At the beginning of this session, in his paper “The Possibility of Establishment of Comparative Border Politics: Serbia and Japan” Mamoru Sadakata, Professor at the Nagoya University, examined the meaning of regional boundaries in contemporary international relations, especially in South-Eastern Europe and Northeast Asia. Professor Sadakata pointed out that Serbia’s regional boundaries had changed frequently (the Near East, the Balkans, Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, and the Western Balkans) and made a comparison with Japan, whose boundaries were also changed (the Far East, Northeast Asia, the Asia-Pacific, and East Asia). In the paper “What do National Borders Mean for Okinawa?: National Security and the Public Opinion on the U.S. Military Basement”, the second participant, Taro Tsukimura, Professor at the Doshisha University, presented the difficulties regarding the “Okinawa question”, especially from the perspective of the meaning of national borders for Okinawa. In his paper “International Legal Aspects of Delimitation on the Border Rivers: the Danube River Case”, Duško Dimitrijević, Director of the IIPE, analysed the question of territorial delimitation between Croatia and Serbia on the Danube

River, which resulted from the succession of SFR Yugoslavia. At the end of the first session, in the paper “Borders of the National Territory in History Education” Shinichi Yamazaki, lecturer at the University of Tokyo, presented the results of a comparative analysis on how national territory had been conceived, both in history textbooks of the Yugoslav successor states (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia) after gaining their independence, as well as in those of Japan.

Regional cooperation in Asia was the agenda of the second session. In the paper “Review of the Mechanism of Modern Conflicts from the Theoretical Point of International Political Economy“, the first participant, Hiroaki Hamana, lecturer at OISCA College of Global Cooperation, analysed the conceptual shortcoming regarding the concept of fragile state and presented the results of the usage of the agency theory in examination of the relationship between the government and the citizen within a fragile state. In her paper “The Nature of Japan’s connections with the South-East Asian Community (ASEAN)“, Aleksandra Babović, Research Associate at the IIPE, analysed Japan’s diplomatic practice towards the ongoing process of South-East Asian integration. She pointed out that Japan was historically and geopolitically inseparable from this region with its proactive role in the rationalization process also emphasizing Japan’s reluctant policy since it delicately combined bilateral and multilateral approaches to this cooperation. In the paper “PR China – Border Issues within the Framework of Modernization and Opening Up“, the next participant of the second session, Dragana Mitrović, Professor at the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade, analysed China’s demarcation and creation of secure land and sea borders as an essential part of the implementation of its reforms and the strategy of opening up. In the paper “Development of Economic Relations between Japan and South-Eastern European Countries“, Masahiko Yoshii, Professor at the Kobe University, presented the trade and FDI data which showed that economic relations between Japan and South-Eastern European countries had been very weak, having very peculiar characteristics. At the end of this session, in the paper “Eastern Partnership as Regional Framework for European Union’s Cooperation with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia“, Ana Jović-Lazić and Marko Nikolić, Research Associates at the IIPE, summarized the main points of the EU policy towards these former Soviet republics since May 2009, when the policy was officially launched.

The third working session was dedicated to regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. In his paper “National and Civilization Borders in the Balkans“, the first participant of this session, Slobodan Janković, Research Associate at the IIPE, examined the national and civilization borders in the Balkans in the light of contemporary international relations theories recalling

classical geopolitical thought in the attempt to determine whether the Balkans were anything else than a highly problematic border zone and what role in that zone was reserved for Serbia and the Serbs. In the paper “Tourism as a Factor of Balanced Regional Development of Serbia and Cooperation with Countries in the Region”, Pero Petrović, Professorial Fellow at the IIPE, underlined the importance of the sector of tourism in regional development of Serbia through its direct and indirect impacts on the regional economy. In the paper “Kosovo as a Frontier Community: Comparison with the Reflection of Japanese Historiography”, the next participant, Ryoji Momose, Assistant Professor at the Osaka University, analysed how nation-centred historiography might contribute to the formation of negative understanding of the region, using an example of the Serbian southern province. In their paper “Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans as a Precondition for the European Union Membership”, Dragan Đukanović, Research Fellow and Ivona Lađevac, Research Associate at the IIPE, analysed the role of the Republic of Serbia in the regional initiatives in South Eastern Europe stressing that the main objective of Serbia’s participation in the regional forums of cooperation was the promotion of its foreign policy interests. The authors also emphasized that the establishment of regional forms of cooperation was the obligation of the Western Balkan countries with a view to their European Union integration examining the possibilities for the promotion of Serbia’s interests by strengthening its role in the multilateral frameworks of cooperation in South Eastern Europe. In her paper “Serbia and the European Union Danube Strategy”, the next participant, Edita Stojić-Karanović, Professorial Fellow at the IIPE, pointed out the importance of the EU Danube Strategy for Serbia and presented the main activities of the International Scientific Forum “Danube - River of Cooperation”. It strives towards achieving an objective of identifying Serbia as a Danube region country. The Croat question in Yugoslavia between the two World Wars was the subject of the paper “Making the Croat Question through Political Language in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia”, presented by Takuya Moma from the University of Tokyo. At the end of this session, in their paper “Regional cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism and Organized Crime”, Dejan Gajić and Žaklina Novičić, Research Associates at the IIPE, examined possible connections between the criminal activity networks and terrorism and the modalities for cross-border regional cooperation in the field of the fight against these threats.

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