Modern conflicts are characterized by vast intelligence-gathering. Present-day nations run huge infrastructures to gather any possible information and consider them a vital asset, as well as a symbol of national prowess. Today, even laymen can easily obtain information on remote theaters of war, while sitting comfortably in their living rooms and watching TV or surfing the internet. More professional organizations may gather virtually limitless information on any target or issue, using satellites, airplanes, radars, and other means of COMINT, SIGINT, ELINT, IMINT, ISINT, and defense HUMINT.¹ In pre-modern times, intelligence organizations were much smaller and less sophisticated, and gathering information was far more difficult. Pre-modern wars were fought with the sides having very little knowledge or careful assessment of the enemy and its capabilities.² The significance of intelligence gathering began to grow in the nineteenth century, and in this respect the Russo-Japanese War seems to be a crossroads, if not a turning point, in which military intelligence gained major importance affecting the course of the entire campaign.

In modern conflicts, intelligence gathered before the outbreak of hostilities enables decision makers to judge the intentions of their enemy, to assess its relative power, and to devise plausible ways to exploit the enemy’s weak points. In wartime, intelligence may make it possible to identify opportunities to undermine the enemy and to facilitate decisions regarding the timing of a diplomatic denouement. The Russo-Japanese War was no exception. Before and during the nineteen-month war both belligerents were active in assembling data about each other’s military preparations, combat potential, and war plans, as well
as tactical information for immediate use during a battle. Predicting a conflict between them, both Japan and Russia established networks of agents who collected information, such as the deployment of the enemy's naval and army units and bases, landing sites, and acquisition of weapons. Whereas the Japanese deployed numerous agents in Manchuria and Korea and were able to assess accurately the strengths and weaknesses of their foes, and pinpoint the deployment of the units of the Imperial Russian Army and Imperial Russian Navy in East Asia, the Russians relied on reports of a small number of agents and attachés, notably Colonel G.M. Vannovskii, who resided in Japan in 1900–1902.\(^3\) How badly Russia underestimated the military strength of Japan is evident from Vannovskii's reports, but the war revealed that it failed in other respects too. It misunderstood Japan's motives and strategic vision, and it was ignorant of its general capacity and tactical skills. In all these aspects, ranging from gathering and analyzing information, subversion and instigating opposition to disseminating propaganda, Japan fared far better.

Foreign observers in 1904–05 and afterwards often expressed their astonishment at the Japanese victory over Russia, whose land army at the beginning of the twentieth century was the world's largest. None of them mentioned or even considered intelligence gathering as a significant factor in Japan's military success. Although an increasing number of studies have examined the failure of intelligence gathering and estimates on the Russian side, the importance of this topic on the Japanese side has by and large been overlooked.\(^4\) While relatively much has been written on the adventurous but rather unproductive efforts Japanese agents made in Europe to promote subversion against Russia during the war, very few articles, if any, have reviewed systematically the intelligence gathering organizations in Japan in that period.\(^5\) Based on archival sources, this chapter aims at filling this gap through a preliminary description of Japanese organizations for intelligence gathering and their activities, as well as assessing their effect on Japan's war efforts.

**SOURCES ABOUT INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES DURING THE WAR IN JAPANESE ARCHIVES**

Only few primary sources are available today on the intelligence activities of Japan during the Russo-Japanese War. There are a number of private collections, especially at the disposal of *Kensei shiryōshitsu*, the National Diet Library, Tokyo. This archive contains the papers of Akashi Motojirō, who set up an intelligence network in the Russian Empire as military attaché to Sweden, including some detailed statements about the sums he paid to his spies, and letters from spies; the papers of Nagaoka Gaishi, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who directly commanded military attachés; the papers of Iguchi Shōgo, Chief of the General Department of the General Staff, who settled the
intelligence accounts; and the papers of Terauchi Masatake, Minister of War, who partly controlled Akashi's activity in Tokyo. Similarly, there are a few files about intelligence activities during the war in the Diplomatic Record Office (NGK) in Tokyo; the Foreign Ministry did not file them under the title “Intelligence,” but nonetheless has kept documents on each subject. Files about the ministry's secret funds were almost completely destroyed soon after Japan's surrender at the end of World War II.

Most of the documents related to the war in the General Staff and the Naval General Staff met a similar fate, and the remaining ones were confiscated by the Allied forces and were returned to Japan in the 1950s. Thanks to the Ministry of the Imperial Household, important material on the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, reported to the Emperor, was kept in its library until the 1950s. They were moved to the Library of the Military History Department, National Institute of Defense Studies, Defense Agency (LMHD), under the title Chiyoda shiryō. Today, certain documents about military and naval intelligence, including military and naval attaches' telegrams and reports, are available there. Finally, documents regarding the fourth intelligence organization, the Foreign Bureau of the Police Department, Ministry of Interior, were reduced to ashes during and especially soon after World War II.

INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR PURPOSES

On the eve of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan did not have a combined intelligence structure, either for defense intelligence (jōhō) or for covert activities overseas (chōhō). Instead, it relied on three organizations, and all took part in intelligence gathering on Russia.

The Foreign Ministry, Political Department (Seimukyoku)
The core organization for intelligence gathering at the Foreign Ministry was the Political Department. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of staff proper at the ministry was only seventy-four. About ten officials worked in the Political Department. There were no such sections as today's Asian Department or European Department. Except for economic affairs, all the staff dealing with political issues were concentrated in these department. Although Japanese legations and consulates dispatched fewer telegrams and reports than today, this department seemed to face many difficulties with the amount sent at times of crisis, such as wartime.

When information about Russia arrived in Tokyo the officials in charge read it first, and then transferred it to the director of the department, Yamaza Enjirō, for further analysis. If he deemed it important, copies of the particular telegram were forwarded to the organization in charge. Information on the Trans-Siberian Railway, for example, was forwarded to the General Staff, information on the Baltic Fleet to the Naval General Staff, and so on. The Political Department analyzed a
great deal of information, and once every few months printed a summary entitled Nichiro jiken yōhō (Report on Russo-Japanese Affairs), which was distributed to a relatively broad audience, including Emperor Meiji, each ministry, the General Staff, the Naval General Staff, etc.\textsuperscript{8}

The purpose of the ministry’s intelligence activities was to obtain necessary information for the use of Japanese diplomacy. As the Russo-Japanese War was considered to some extent a limited war aimed at obtaining concessions in Manchuria and Korea, both belligerents were willing to conclude a peace treaty under reasonable conditions. The ministry in charge of treaties had to collect information concerning discussions on peace in the Great Powers. The foreign policy of Russia and the other great powers attracted Japan’s attention too. One crucial aspect was the inclination and willingness of each of the great powers to declare its neutrality soon after the outbreak of hostilities, and consequently the ministry also paid much attention to any violations of neutrality (e.g. an embargo on the export of prohibited goods in wartime and the enemy’s warships calling at neutral countries’ ports).

Other major issues were Russian plans for raising foreign loans in Europe and America, and the attitudes and conduct of France, Russia’s principal ally. For the purpose of judging Russian capacity of continuing the war, the Political Department kept an eye on Russian internal affairs: political parties, movements of the court, economics, society, public opinion, and activities of revolutionary and other opposition movements.\textsuperscript{9}

\textit{The General Staff, The Russian Section of the First Bureau (Roshiya han)}

Following the military reform of 1899, the General Staff established an independent intelligence bureau, which included the First Bureau (in charge of Russia, Manchuria, Central and North Europe, Balkan Peninsula) and the Second Bureau (in charge of United Kingdom, Holland, and their respective colonies, China except for Manchuria, South-East Asia, and the United States). The largest and most important section in the First Bureau was undoubtedly the Russian Section (\textit{Roshiya han}), which was in charge of planning operations in case of a conflict with the Russian Empire, as well as gathering and analyzing information about it.\textsuperscript{10} The head of the section before the war was Major Tanaka Giichi, a former assistant military attaché in Russia and a future war minister and prime minister (1927–29).\textsuperscript{11} Fluent in Russian and proficient in ballroom dancing popular in St. Petersburg, Tanaka knew the war arena first hand and kept abreast of local affairs. Completing a four-year stint in St. Petersburg in April 1902, he returned to Japan via Siberia. In the tradition of earlier “intelligence riders,” such as Fukushima Yasumasa’s reconnaissance mission in Siberia, Mongolia, and Manchuria during 1892–93, Tanaka explored Russia’s major transport routes and bases in East Asia. He traveled on the Trans-Siberian Railway to Karymskoye and on the Chinese Eastern Railway to Harbin, then sailed down the Sungari
and Amur rivers and visited Khabarovsk, the vicinity of Vladivostok, and Port Arthur.12

In the months before the war, and more so with the outbreak of hostilities in February 1904, each military unit in the front, and every military attaché abroad, searched for any possible information and additional data on the Russian army.13 The materials gathered were first examined in the Russian Section, and then, important information was quickly distributed to the appropriate organizations. One of the section's main tasks was to draw very detailed battlefield maps frequently, and to mark the location of enemy units on them on the basis of the latest data.14 When the Manchurian Army was newly organized in June 1904, most of the staff of the Russian Section were assigned to the general headquarters of the army and dispatched to Manchuria, together with Tanaka. Thereafter, most information was not dispatched to Tokyo but directly to the headquarters in Manchuria and analyzed there. Once a month the headquarters updated the list of Russian military formations in Northeast Asia, together with detailed maps indicating the location of the Russian units.15

After the core organization of the army intelligence moved to Manchuria, the remaining personnel in the General Staff in Tokyo dealt only with information sent by military attachés and forwarded them to the headquarters. Once every few months they produced handwritten reports entitled Rogun no kinkō (the Recent Russian Military Situation in the Far East) and printed some copies of Saikin no roguin (the Present Russian Army).16 In these publications they provided detailed information on the names, sizes, and places of Russian units newly sent to the front. Judging from the surviving copies, the most important intelligence issue they faced was information concerning the exact scale and place of Russian military units in Manchuria at the given time and their prospects in the near future. Accordingly, the Japanese intelligence organizations were interested in mobilization and military supply in European Russia and the transport capacity of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which was virtually the only line of supply for the Russian army stationed in Manchuria.17

Naval General Staff, The Third Bureau (Dai san pan)

Out of the fifty-four personnel of the Naval General Staff in Tokyo during the war, sixteen people, including technical officers and printers, were assigned to the Third Bureau, namely the naval intelligence branch.18 This branch dealt with large quantities of information concerning Russian naval activities gathered by intelligence officers in major ports throughout East and South-East Asia, naval attachés in Europe, and personnel observation points on the coast of Formosa, Korea, and Japan, and reconnaissance ships. During the war this intelligence organization issued more than 1,200 mimeographed reports entitled Dai kai jō (Information of the Imperial Naval Headquarters) which were distributed to the headquarters of the Combined Fleet and other significant organizations.19 Reading these reports, we may conclude that the Naval General Staff was concerned
about the existence of Russian submarines in the Pacific arena at the first stage of war. These baseless fears were the result of the mistaken conviction that the two Japanese battleships *Yashima* and *Hatsuse*, sunk off Port Arthur on April 15, 1904, were hit by torpedoes launched from submarines that had arrived shortly before.\textsuperscript{20} In the following months this organization was concerned mainly with the movements of the Russian naval units in Port Arthur and Vladivostok, and following the departure of the Baltic Fleet in October 1904 it collected information concerning its movements, as well as the name, type, and scale of ships, the names of their captains and the capability of their crews, ports of call, and the arrival and departure time, the future route and the plan of operations.\textsuperscript{21}

**INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES OVERSEAS AND IN THE WAR THEATER**

The Japanese intelligence personnel abroad included diplomats, military attachés, and naval attachés. Each group collected information only for a specific organization: the Foreign Ministry, General Staff, and Naval General Staff, respectively.

*Legations and Consulates*

In January 1904, the foreign ministry ordered its branches overseas (see Table 6.1), consisting of legations, consulates, and commercial agents' offices, to gather information on Russia. The demand exerted extreme pressure. The legation in Paris, for example, consisted of only seven staff members, apart from the military and naval attachés, their assistants, and local personnel. Of the seven diplomats, only two or three were able to collect the information requested from Tokyo.\textsuperscript{22}

Part of the daily assignments of diplomats stationed in legations overseas was to scan the main newspapers in their respective spheres, occasionally with the help of translators, and determine whether news items were important. They attended parties sponsored by the government or legations of the great powers, and exchanged information with foreign diplomats and leading figures of the host country's government. In addition, they gathered information using agents of Japanese trading and shipping companies, as well as newspaper correspondents stationed abroad. Finally, some specific information was purchased from non-Japanese people who visited the legations to sell it.\textsuperscript{23} The diplomats had to request the ministry in Tokyo for permission to pay for such information. Naturally, this source was unreliable and there were more than a few cases where high prices were paid for false information.\textsuperscript{24}

Japanese intelligence agents actively employed spies and local agents. This activity was not new: and a decade earlier, during the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese diplomats had begun to practice it widely.\textsuperscript{25} Outside the war arena the Army and Navy had to entrust the collection of military and naval information to the Foreign Ministry, because neither organization had sufficient trained intelligence officers able to take an active part in intelligence gathering in foreign countries.\textsuperscript{26} On January 12,
1904, the Foreign Minister, Komura Jutarō, ordered his personnel to employ two spies each in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and Vladivostok. In Odessa and Vladivostok the order was fulfilled. In St. Petersburg, however, even the crafty military attaché to Russia, Colonel Akashi Motojirō, failed to follow the instruction due to the strict surveillance of the okhrana (tsarist secret police). As the prospects for war increased, the ministry hurried in February to set up a legation in Stockholm as part of an attempt to establish an intelligence network in the Russian capital and control it from abroad. Further calls to establish a spy network in Russia were made soon after the battle of Liaoyang (August 28–September 4, 1904), the surrender of Port Arthur (January 2, 1905), and the battle of Tsushima (May 27–28, 1905).

Japanese intelligence activities against Russian missions in Asia took place in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, and in a few other places where Japanese legations or consulates were established. Shanghai, probably the biggest business center in East Asia at that time and the terminal of a submarine telegraph cable between Japan and the outside world, became a particular venue of the intelligence struggle between Japan and Russia. When Japanese legations and consulates decided to employ spies they asked Tokyo for funds. After permission was obtained payment was effected via telegraphic transfer. The diplomats asked the spies for detailed and signed receipts, which they forwarded to Tokyo.

Overall, the Foreign Ministry spent huge sums on intelligence. Makino Nobuaki, Japan’s minister to Vienna, for example, dispatched an Austrian spy to Russia for forty-eight days, and paid 4,500 yen (worth about 36 million yen today, or about $US330,000), including transport and accommodation fees. On the basis of this figure, Makino’s payments to two spies employed throughout the war (nineteen months) reached almost 110,000 yen ($8 million), and the total expenditure of Japanese covert intelligence activities in Europe may have exceeded 400,000 yen ($30 million). Another aspect of the expenditures was telegraph fees, especially diplomatic telegrams, which were extremely expensive at that period. For example, a telegram with approximately thirty-three words between Paris and Tokyo cost 85 yen ($640). The Japanese legation in Paris sent 280 telegrams to Tokyo in 1904, which alone cost 23,800 yen ($1.8 million). There were six legations in Europe where intelligence work was conducted. On the basis of those figures, more than 250,000 yen ($19 million) was spent simply on telegraph use between Europe and Japan during the war.

ARMS INTELLIGENCE

The intelligence activities conducted by the army in the theater of war were partly centralized and partly decentralized. Each of the five armies and the thirteen divisions which took part in the war dispatched its own scouts to obtain HUMINT combat intelligence in the war zone and its periphery in Korea and Manchuria. As the scouts went on horseback,
their range was somewhat restricted. Before the war the army had not had a special training program for scouts, and as a result, intelligence officers were occasionally unable to report accurate information to their headquarters. In Manchuria, both the Japanese and the Russians employed many Chinese agents, some of whom were eventually captured and executed as enemy spies. Japanese ability to infiltrate Russian positions using Chinese was thorough; they could even bribe a Chinese translator in the Russian general headquarters in Manchuria and acquire through him some important information.

In many cases, Japanese intelligence officers could themselves infiltrate the Russian lines disguised as locals. A case in point is the almost legendary exploits of Ishimitsu Makio, who collected information on Russian activities in Manchuria before the war while residing in Harbin under the guise of a laundryman, photographer, barber, and trader. Direct and indirect contacts with agents were handled by intelligence officers of each army and division. Colonel Aoki Norizumi, the military attaché in Beijing, cooperated with Yuan Shikai, a Chinese official and statesman, who supported Japan's war effort and became president of the first republic of China a decade later. Yuan acquired information on the Russian army in Manchuria, which was sent at first to the General Staff in Tokyo, and then sent back to the general headquarters of the Japanese Manchurian Army, where it was useful in planning operations.

The exploits of Colonel Akashi in Europe merit probably the greatest consideration. On January 12, 1904, when the Imperial Conference determined the day the war would be launched, the General Staff ordered Akashi to establish an intelligence network within Russian territory. Under the eyes of the Russian police, Akashi was able to subvert an officer of the Russian general staff, but could not organize the network effectively in St. Petersburg. After the outbreak of war he moved to Stockholm and started to reorganize in cooperation with Finnish ex-officers and officers of the Swedish general staff. He also employed a Hungarian mediator and dispatched agents to the main stations of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Akashi, however, was not the only player in the Russian intelligence sphere. Japanese military attachés stationed in the capitals of the great powers, assistant attachés, and diplomats were also involved in the endeavor to establish a network to monitor Russian war activities. The military attaché in Berlin, Colonel Ōi Kikutarō (Shigemoto), for example, analyzed public information in German newspapers and journals. Colonel Utsunomiya Taro, the military attaché in London, received large amounts of information on the Russian army from the intelligence section of British War Office. This information was one of the most important British contributions to the Japanese war effort, and it was given on the basis of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance concluded in 1902.

Naval Intelligence
The military potential of a given navy is determined by the number and quality of its warships. In contrast to the army, naval potential is roughly
equal in peacetime and in wartime. For this reason, the main task of naval intelligence in wartime is to locate the positions and routes of enemy naval units rather than to assess size and quality of performance. After the victory at the battle of Chemulpo (off Inchon, Korea) on February 9, 1904, the Imperial Japanese Navy began its blockade of the main part of the Russian Pacific Fleet stationed in Port Arthur. While these efforts were by and large successful, the navy was unable to block the activities of the Vladivostok Independent Cruiser Squadron which harassed Japanese military transport until late summer 1904.42 The monitoring failure resulted in the sinking of fifteen Japanese transport ships and almost led to the dismissal of Admiral Kamimura Hikonojo, commander of the Second Fleet, who was in charge of tracking the Russian cruisers. Eventually, however, on August 14, 1914, the Japanese efforts were successful, and Kamimura managed to redeem himself. On that day his force encountered the Russian squadron and sank the *Rurik* in the ensuing battle of the Korean Straits. This stopped the activities of the Russian squadron until the end of the war and eliminated a significant strategic menace.

The Baltic Fleet in its new garb as the Second Pacific Fleet set the Japanese Navy a much greater task of monitoring activities. It became critical when the fleet approached Northeast Asia and the war arena in May 1905. To fulfill this task, the Navy constructed a large number of observation posts and watchtowers on the Goto islands, the Tsushima islands, and the southern coast of Korea, and deployed numerous patrol boats and ships to screen any naval movement in the area between the north of Kyushu and the south of Korea. Despite some justified pessimism, these efforts were eventually fruitful. In the early morning of 27 May, the armed merchant cruiser *Shinano maru* detected the Russian armada and cabled the exciting news to the Combined Fleet anchoring in Chinhae, near Pusan on the southwest coast of Korea.43

The ultimate success in the battle of Tsushima a few hours later was the end of an eight-month endeavor, starting from the very day of the departure of the Russian Fleet in October 1904. It could not have materialized without the continuous flow of intelligence reports regarding the position of the fleet. Right from the start of the voyage Japan established a broad network to keep a constant eye on the movements of the fleet. Naval attachés stationed in main cities in Europe and port cities in Asia took an active part in gathering information on the movement and progress of the Baltic Fleet, as well as its formation, arms, morale of crew, supply, and routes. They cooperated with diplomats, and stationed agents along the German Baltic Sea coast and the straits between Sweden and Denmark. They were unable to station them, however, along the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean, and of Africa. In those areas Japan was helped by the British Admiralty, which provided the necessary information to Captain Kaburagi Makoto, the naval attaché in London and the intermediary at the Admiralty.44

Japan also acted independently at certain sites along the route of the Russian fleet. The Navy dispatched an intelligence officer, Commander
Tonami Kurakichi, to Egypt to monitor the movement of a detachment of the Baltic Fleet under the command of Rear Admiral Dmitrii von Felkerzam (Fölkersam) and the possible and much feared sailing of the Black Sea Fleet via the Suez Canal. To fulfill his mission, Tonami slipped inside the harbor of Port Said impersonating an employee of Nihon Yūsen Kaisha, Japan’s biggest shipping company. Other high-ranking naval officers were sent to ports believed to be the final stations of the Baltic Fleet en route to Vladivostok, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. They monitored the movements of Russian vessels, supply ships employed by Russia, and activities of the Russian agents in those ports. To support this network, the Japanese consul in Singapore ordered his agents stationed at Malacca, Sunda, and the Lombok Straits between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific to observe the passage of the Russian fleet, and he received the information from ships of friendly nations. In spring of 1905, the Naval General Staff also dispatched naval officers to main ports in China such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Yantai to collect information on Russian naval activities in East Asia and the western part of the Pacific Ocean. Evidently, these monitoring activities were not the cause of the Japanese victory in the battle of Tsushima, but without them it would not have materialized in the first place.

OUTCOMES AND GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Intelligence activity is not only “the missing dimension of most diplomatic history,” as one diplomat described it, but is also the missing dimension of most military history. This is all the more apt in respect of Japan’s modern wars due to the destruction of many of the materials relevant to this activity soon after Japan’s surrender in 1945. Indeed, it is difficult to measure or even assess the success of an intelligence network. Usually the importance of intelligence is revealed when it is missing or when it fails to provide essential information, but what does success mean? In retrospect, the role of Japanese intelligence during the Russo-Japanese War was to gather accurate information on Russia, thereby allowing the decision makers in the government and both the army and the navy to assess the potential and limitations of Russian power projection. It is, however, almost impossible to perform flawlessly and acquire not only all the necessary information on one’s opponent’s affairs, but also to analyze them correctly.

The Japanese intelligence services were far from perfection. They overestimated, among other things, the capacity of the Trans-Siberian Railway and ability of the Russians to deploy submarines in the Pacific arena. Some of the errors were caused by faulty analysis. In the case of the Trans-Siberian Railway, for example, an intelligence officer of the General Staff simply calculated the railway transport capacity on the basis of calculable Russian data. The railway, however, did not function according to theoretical calculations as the Japanese expected, and moved slower and carried fewer troops. The officer responsible for this
analysis was unable to visualize the Russian climate and vast territory, to fathom the Russian temperament, or to assess and quantify their effect on military movements. Nonetheless, and unlike their attitude before and during the Pacific War (1941–45), during the Russo-Japanese War Japanese intelligence officers soberly carried out their task of gathering information and analyzed it with virtually no prejudice or sense of superiority, resulting occasionally in a slight overestimation of Russia’s capacities.

A further issue is the operational outcome of intelligence activities. In the Russo-Japanese War, intelligence information and analysis were transferred immediately to other relevant branches of the two services, whereas in the Pacific War, such information was not reflected well in Japanese military policy and operation-making. Although it is difficult to compare the two wars, it seems that intelligence activities during the former were successful partly due to careful information gathering, modest analysis, and transferring the information to operational units which treated it seriously and incorporated it in their planning. Finally, the Japanese intelligence services suffered during this war from very limited cryptanalysis capabilities. Even considering the limited technologies of cryptanalysis at that time, Japanese capabilities were inadequate, and certainly inferior to those of Russia. In the first place, the Japanese intelligence organizations were unable to intercept Russia diplomatic correspondence, as their rivals could, and if ever they succeeded they were probably unable to decipher it. The materials found in the Japanese archives shed no further light on this issue, and there is some kernel of truth in Andrew and Dilkes’ assessment that the absence of this dimension condemned the Japanese intelligence community to "second-class status."

In a broad view, however, Japanese intelligence was efficient and provided much of the information necessary for Japan, helping its two military services to conduct their warfare and its leaders to make the necessary decisions. It certainly lacked many of the capacities known today, or even those possessed by the great powers at that time, and by imperial Japan during the Pacific War. Nevertheless, Japanese intelligence gathering during the Russo-Japanese War should be examined against the backdrop of either its capacity in the first Sino-Japanese War or the Russian intelligence gathering in 1904–05. Compared with their performance a decade earlier, the Japanese intelligence organizations had undoubtedly grown more efficient and professional. Now they did not have to contend only with their familiar Asian front, but also with the European arena and along the route from Europe to Asia, where their agents did not have much experience in such activities.

The Japanese intelligence skills are even more obvious when compared with Russian intelligence activities. By the end of the war the services of both nations emerged as mature and seasoned organizations, yet when examined from the perspective of the eve of the war in 1904 the Japanese organization proved much better in assessing the manpower
### Table 6.1: Japanese Intelligence Branches and Personnel before and during the Russo-Japanese War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Diplomat</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Hayashi Tadasu (M)</td>
<td>Colonel Utsunomiya Tarō</td>
<td>Captain Kaburagi Makoto</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Major Hisamatsu Sadakoto</td>
<td>Commander Ichijo Saneteru</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Colonel Ōi Kikutarō</td>
<td>Captain Takigawa Kazumasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>Motono Ichirō (M)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>Inoue Katsunosuke (M)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>Makino Nobuaki (M)</td>
<td>Major Johoji Gorō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>Ōyama Tsunase (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>Akabane Shūrō (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Hague</td>
<td>Mitsuhashi Nobukata (M)</td>
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<td>Brussels</td>
<td>Kato Tsunetada (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>Akiduki Satsuma (M)</td>
<td>Colonel Akashi Motojirō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Petersburg*</td>
<td>Kurino Shin’ichirō (M)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Captain Sakai Tadatoshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odessa*</td>
<td>Iijima Kametarō (C)</td>
<td>Colonel Akashi Motojirō</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vladivostok*</td>
<td>Kawakami Toshitsune (CA)</td>
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<td>Captain Mutō Nobuyoshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>Takahira Kogorō (M)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Major Ishizaka Zenjirō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>Iijima Kametarō (SA)</td>
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<td>Lieutenant Colonel Tachibana Koichirō</td>
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<td>Port Said</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simla, India</td>
<td></td>
<td>Captain Azuma Otohiko</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>Inagami Manjirō (M)</td>
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<td>Captain Mori Yoshitarō</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Tanaka Tokichi (C)</td>
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<td>Lieutenant Tōjō Akitsugu</td>
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<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Noma Seiichi (C)</td>
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<td>Lieutenant Miyaji Tamisaburō</td>
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<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>Odagiri Masunosuke (CG)</td>
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<td>Lieutenant Colonel Tsuneyoshi Tadamichi</td>
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<td>Yantai, China</td>
<td>Mizuno Kokichi (C)</td>
<td>Major Morita Toshito</td>
<td>Captain Nishi Shinrokurō</td>
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<td>Ijuin Hikokichi (CG)</td>
<td>Major General Sennami Tarō</td>
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<td>Colonel Aoki Norizumi</td>
<td>Lieutenant Commander Yoshida Masujirō</td>
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<td>Yingkou</td>
<td>Segawa Asanoshin (M)</td>
<td>Captain Kawasaki Ryōsaburō</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Hayashi Gonsuke (M)</td>
<td>Major General Ijichi Kosuke</td>
<td>Lieutenant Commander Yoshida Masujirō</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Before the war
(M) Minister, (CG) Consul General, (C) Consul, (CA) Commercial Agent, (SA) Secret Agent
then available to Russia in Northeast Asia, its actual capabilities, and its
course of action in case of a conflict. Japanese intelligence organizations
were also more skillful in gathering tactical information using recon-
naissance parties in Manchuria and Korea, and were more competent in
recruiting the local population to assist in their needs. Russian intelli-
gence services, by contrast, underestimated Japan's capacities and mis-
judged its hostile intentions. They failed to create any significant
intelligence network in Japan, and were oblivious most of the time to the
deployment of their enemy's land and naval units.53

All in all, Japanese intelligence organizations and information gather-
ings activities before and during the Russo-Japanese War were deficient in
certain aspects, but they were adequate for a regional conflict with a foe
such as Russia, whose intelligence gathering functioned worse. Japan's
intelligence organizations were not large at that stage, but they focused
closely on the genuine strategic needs of a nation at war and provided
much of the information necessary to open hostilities by a surprise attack,
conduct a successful military campaign, and conclude the war with a rea-
sonable agreement around the negotiating table. In this sense, the Russo-
Japanese War perhaps marks the zenith of Japanese intelligence gathering.
In later stages Japan's intelligence organizations grew bigger and more
sophisticated but they never performed so adequately again.

NOTES

1 Acronyms for communications intelligence, signals intelligence, electronic
intelligence, imagery intelligence, open source intelligence, and human intel-
ligence.

2 See, for example, Keegan, 2004.

3 On Vannovskii, see Marshall, 2004: 394.

4 For studies on intelligence activities and assessment before, during and after
the war, see Inaba, 1993; Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, 1996; Inaba, 1993,

5 For studies of various aspects of Japanese intelligence activities during this
period, see Fallt, 1976; Nish, 1984, 1987; Akashi, 1988; Inaba, 1992, 1994a,

6 Inaba, 1994. See also Nagaoka Gaishi Monjo Kenkyûkai, 1989; Iguchi Shôgo
Monjo Kenkyûkai, 1994. Documents concerning intelligence in the Terauchi
Papers have not been published yet.

7 Gaimushô shokuin roku, 1903–08, NGK.

8 Nichiro jiken yôhô, No.1–7 [Bunko, Chiyoda shiryô 6, 214–20], LMHD.

9 Kakkoku naisei kankei zassai (Rokoku no bui) [1.6.3.2–9], Nichiro kôwa jôyaku
teketsu ikken (Kakkoku no taidô narabi ni yoron) [2.2.1.3–3], Nichiro sen'eki kankei
rokoku baruchikku kantai toku kankei ikken [5.2.2.20], Nichiro sen'eki kankei
kakkoku no churitsu zakken [5.2.14.8], Nichiro sen'eki kankei teikoku ni oite mit-
teisha shiyo zakken [5.2.7.3], NGK.

Important telegrams from each commander were filed in Gogai denpō ([Bunko, Chiyoda shiryō, 362–83], LMHD) and reports from each military attaché in Toku denpō ([Bunko, Chiyoda shiryō, 384–402], LMHD).

Kyokutō rogun haichi zu, January 1904 [Bunko, Chiyoda shiryō, 1000], LMHD.


Mitsuhashi to Komura, telegram No. 9 on January 9, 1905, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.


Dai kai jo [9, Chiyoda, 156–66], LMHD.

These battleships were sunk by mines.

Mitsuhashi to Komura, telegram No.9 on January 9, 1905, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.

See Gaimusho shokuin roku.

The most renowned foreign agent Japan employed before the war was probably Alexander von Siebold, the son of the German Japanologist Philipp Franz von Siebold. See Nish, 1977: 45, 270–272.

Motono to Komura, telegram No. 1 on January 2, 1904, Komura to Motono, telegram No. 3 on January 7, 1904, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.

On permission for such activities, see a message from Foreign Minister, Mutsu Munemitsu, to diplomat Kurino Shin‘ichirō, December 15, 1894, quoted in Mutsu, 1982: 271.

Tani, 1966: 299.

Komura to Kurino Shin‘ichirō, telegram No. 16 on January 12, 1904, Komura to Iijima, telegram No. 23 on January 12, 1904, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.

Iijima to Komura, telegram No. 36 on January 14, 1904, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.

Kurino to Komura, telegram No. 31 on January 14, 1904, Hayashi Tadasu to Komura, telegram No. 83 on February 5, 1904, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.

Makino to Komura, telegram No. 58 on September 8, 1904, telegram No. 1 on January 4, 1905, telegram No. 29 on June 1, 1905, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.


Mitsuhashi to Komura, report No. 130 on March 31, 1905, Exposes from 16/2–2613, L 81.37, A. Browne. Receipt from the 16 April to 16 May : the sum of 137.7, etc., Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.

Makino to Komura, telegram No. 97 on June 15, 1904, Nichiro sen‘eki kankei teikoku ni oite mitteisha shiyo zakken.
Kurobane Shigeru estimated that the entire amount spent by Akashi surpassed one million yen ($75 million). In Kurobane, 1976: 86–87.

"Tokuyaku denpō tsukibetsu tsusu narabi ni ryōkinhyō," Himitsu nikki, 1905 [Sanbohonbu, Nichiro sen'eki, M38–2], LMHD.


See Ishimitsu’s memoir, Ishimitsu, 1958. On Ishimitsu’s exploits, see also Nish, 1985a.


Utsunomiya to Sanbō sōchō, report on October 13, 1903, Hi hokoku, October 1904 [Bunko, Chiyoda shiryō, 470], on June 18, 1904, Hi hokoku, June-July 1904 [Bunko, Chiyoda shiryō, 469], LMHD.


Gunrei, 1934: 232.

Telegram between Kaburagi and Chief of the Naval Staff, Meiji 37–8 nen senshi genko [11, Nichiro, M37 320] LMHD.

Tonami chūsa shutchō hokoku [10, Gaichūin, M30–12], LHHD.

Kaigun gunrei, Gokuhi, Meiji 37–8 nen kaisen shi, II [392. 15.G], LMHD, 1–25.

See documents in Teikoku rikukaigun shōkō kaigai haken zakken (Kaigun no bu), vol. 1 [5.1.10.4–2], NGK.


With French assistance, Russian intelligence organizations were able to decrypt Japanese telegrams during the war. The two nations also cooperated during the Moroccan crisis of 1905 and were able to decrypt German telegrams.


Andrew and Dilks, 1984: 8.

See an analysis of Russia’s general intelligence capabilities in Sergeev, 2005: 304.