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In the fall of 1890 Tsar Alexander III sent his son Tsarevich Nicholas on his maiden tour to Asia. The tsar looked upon the trip as the final part of his 22-year-old son’s education as well as a diplomatic mission of goodwill and a demonstration of power. Japan was Nicholas’ final foreign destination in a long itinerary, one lag before Vladivostok where he was to lay the first stone of the Trans-Siberian Railroad’s eastern section. The Japanese public and government welcomed the prince with lavish hospitality, and the visit passed without failure until Nicholas reached Otsu, a small town near Kyoto. There, the future tsar endured a life-threatening episode, which shocked the two nations.1

While being carried on a rickshaw through the narrow streets, Nicholas was suddenly attacked by a xenophobic policeman who inflicted, with his sword, two cuts on Nicholas’ head. Protected by his bowler hat, Nicholas’ wounds were rather shallow; apart from a few stitches and several hours rest, he could continue his trip. In Japan, the shock as well as the shame for the assault hit the public.2 Thousands of people sent telegrams expressing their deep apology, and Emperor Meiji himself hurried to Kyoto to call upon Nicholas in his hotel room. However, in St. Petersburg the tsar was too anxious for his son’s welfare and ordered him to board a Russian warship at once. The emperor personally escorted Nicholas to Kobe’s port, and a grateful Nicholas assured him he bore no grudge following the attempt on his life. Several days later the Russians decided to call off the visit. Despite a loss of face, the emperor returned to Kobe and bade farewell to the departing prince aboard the Russian flagship.

In the years to come, several historians and popular biographers of the tsar were to suggest that the “Otsu Incident” had led to Nicholas’ hostility toward the Japanese and consequently, a few concluded, to the
Russo-Japanese War. A similar opinion was held by Sergei Witte, Nicholas’ finance minister and chief aide in the following decade, who stated in his memoir that the last tsar’s involvement in the “Far Eastern adventure” had been partly due to his “natural animosity against Japan, where an attempt had been made on his life.” More explicit, perhaps, was Alexander Isvolsky, the Russian foreign minister after the war with Japan, who believed that “the attempt upon his life...gave rise to feeling of antipathy, and even hatred, to Japan on the part of Nicholas II, and may not have been without influence upon his Far Eastern policy, which had as its epilogue the Russo-Japanese War.”

Although this reasoning seems to offer both a parsimonious and an elegant account, so far no one has sought to examine it seriously. Admittedly, the attack left the Crown Prince with a visible scar on his forehead, and until his death he suffered from severe headaches, which he attributed to that injury. Nevertheless, there is almost no evidence for Nicholas’ feelings toward the Japanese either during or after the visit. Did he blame the Japanese government for negligence or, even, conspiracy? Did he resent the fact that the assailant was not executed? Did he hate the Japanese?

Regrettfully, we do not have definite answers for these questions since the tsar avoided speaking about that experience and scarcely mentioned it in his writings. There do remain a vast number of documents and memoirs about his tsardom period; however, none of them supports this theory. Nicholas did not push for war with his supposed Japanese enemy, and he never implied his desire for revenge. His genuine attitude toward the Japanese was a mixture of Orientalist fondness and racial hatred, which gradually developed into an excessive underestimation of their capabilities. Such an attitude, as revealed in his assessment of the Japanese military potential prior to the war and his customary reference to them as makaki (little monkeys), does not seem to be a reaction to his violent experience.

This article attempts to examine the sources of Nicholas’ attitude toward the Japanese and the effect it had on his decision-making during the period that preceded the Russo-Japanese War. The contention of this article is that Nicholas’ image of the Japanese, shaped by what he had seen during his visit and the stereotypes he was exposed to before and after, led him to perceive the Japanese as feminine, weak, and inferior. This negative view, more than any vague emotion of vengeance, interfered with, if not determined, the tsar’s underestimation of the Japanese national character and military capability. And as the war was unfolding, this cognitive bias led him to erroneous strategic decisions that accounted, in part, for the Russian fiasco.

The Origins of the War

My contention regarding the role of the tsar’s perceptions does not seek to overlook the geopolitical circumstance in which the two nations were involved but, rather, complements it. In a broad historical perspective the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) can be viewed as an inevitable clash between two expanding nations in a zone where their prospective territories overlapped. Russian expansionism was a long legacy of the tsars. Since the time of Peter the Great, Russia had been determined, in an almost religious obsession, to advance east toward the Pacific. This traditional policy, combined with a power struggle with weakened China, pushed the Russians toward Manchuria and Korea during the second half of the 19th century. The costly construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway commenced in 1891 and was the ultimate demonstration of Russia’s earnest intentions in the region. Japan, on the other hand, was a fresh protagonist in East Asia after more than two centuries of isolation. Following the formation of national unity, rapid modernization, and rearmament, Japan started to look for its own empire. Japanese expansionism, partly as a reaction to external threats and partly as a quest for recognition and status, was born when Russia, already, had reached the coast of the Pacific Ocean. As Japan moved toward its closest neighbor—Korea—Russia was aiming at the same territory.

The Otsu incident occurred at a time of increasing Russian involvement in Northeast Asia. With their eyes on Korea, the Japanese
regarded the impending construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway as a means for further Russian expansion in the region. The Japanese, also, were aware that the visiting Crown Prince was to inaugurate the railway, and the enthusiasm for his visit was mixed with deep suspicion. These early strains were to end the cordial entente that had prevailed between the two countries through their mutual recognition of Russia’s possession of Sakhalin and Japan’s Kuril islands in 1875.

The Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the outcome of a struggle for influence in Korea, broke out the same year that Nicholas ascended to the throne and increased the conflicting interests between Japan and Russia. At the end of the war, China accepted the Japanese peace terms and signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, according to which China was to cede Formosa and the Liaotung Peninsula. Russia was alarmed by the notion of Japanese control in this peninsula—a gateway to Manchuria and Peking—and, with the backing of France and Germany, forced Japan to return it to China. Thereafter, Russia’s growing involvement in Korea was a catalyst for anti-Japanese strife, and the subsequent escape of the Korean king to the Russian legation in Seoul brought Russian influence there to a new zenith.

The next milestone in Russia’s regional involvement was the landing of German troops in Kiachow Bay in November 1897, which led the Chinese, as a counter-measure, to invite the Russians to temporarily occupy Port Arthur (Lushun) in the Liaotung Peninsula. With memories of the Japanese evacuation still vivid, public agitation in Japan compelled the Russians to offer the Japanese a free hand in Korea in return for a similar freedom in Manchuria. This resulted in the Nishirosen Agreement, which was signed in May 1898. The motive behind the Russian desire for compromise was the need to buy time, and this motive would underlie their policy vis-à-vis the Japanese until the war. After absorbing Manchuria, Russia started to contrive an uninterrupted maritime link between Port Arthur and Vladivostok. This necessitated the control, if not the subjugation, of Korea, which Japan considered vital to its own empire. At this point, the clash between relentless Russia and “paranoid” Japan was only a matter of time, as both sides increas-ingly viewed the competition for rail concessions, commercial expansion, and regional dominance as a zero-sum game, which only one of them could win.

The Russians were still not aware of their opponent’s determination. Some thought a collision could be avoided, whereas hard-liners wished to delay it until the completion of the railway. Russia, indeed, started to show greater interest in Korea in the following year, but the Boxer Uprising, which spread throughout the north of China during 1900, momentarily restrained the fuming rivalry. Both Japan and Russia dispatched troops to assist in suppressing the Chinese rebellion. Russia, forced to abandon Korea, used this opportunity to occupy Manchuria by military force. With the joint intervention behind, the time was ripe for the Japanese to settle the struggle over Korea. Fearing that the impending completion of the railway would bring the Russians back into Korea, the militant cabinet of Katsura Taro, established in the spring of 1901, pushed fervently for the Russian evacuation from Manchuria. Although their negotiations with the Russians were soon proved futile, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty signed on January 30, 1902, was a major step in isolating Russia politically as well as militarily.

For Russia, the years between the Boxer Uprising and the war were characterized by increasing adventurism in the region. Much to the dismay of both the Chinese and Japanese, Russia not only eluded evacuation from Manchuria but also strengthened its position there while simultaneously pursuing new opportunities in Korea. Russia’s growing confidence was associated with the advancing Siberian railroad, yet this was still far from completion. This interplay between Russian ambitions and temporary weakness led to an ambiguous foreign policy, which was viewed by some as irresolute and opportunistic. On one hand, Russia maintained its desire to peacefully secure Russian interests in Manchuria, and, on the other hand, it ceaselessly engaged in local schemes, best seen in the Korean venture of the retired General Alexander Bezobrazov during 1903. Trust between the two nations was waning at that stage; notwithstanding the small scale of Bezobrazov’s enterprise, the Japanese considered these “provocative proceedings” as
an operation of strategic importance.17

In August 1903, Japan submitted to the Russians its terms for negotiations that recognized Korea's and China's independence as well as Japan's and Russia's special interests in each of those countries, respectively. Delaying the negotiations, Russia finally set its own terms, which neither guaranteed evacuation from Manchuria nor fully recognized Japanese predominance in Korea. The Japanese countered with some concessions; however, much to their fury the Russians, on the pretext of the tsar'st's illness, were slow to reply. In October, the Japanese government began to advance its plans for war and to mobilize public opinion accordingly. Two months later, when Russia finally delivered its counterproposal—which included no concessions—the Japanese perceived it as an attempt to gain time. Japan's motion for war intensified. In January 1904, it sent an ultimatum emphasizing the Manchurian issue. The delayed Russian response, which can hardly be considered as seeking a compromise, reached Tokyo two days after Japan had ruptured its diplomatic relations with Russia.

The Role of the Tsar

Notwithstanding the historical trend and the eventual geopolitical state of affairs in the beginning of 1904, the Russo-Japanese War was not caused by abstract, impersonal factors. A close examination of the events leading to the war suggests that armed conflict could have been avoided, or at least delayed, if the Russians were more aware of the actual balance of power in the region and less rigid in bargaining for concessions. Analysis of the Russian decision-making during the eve of the war is made easy due to the dominant role played by the tsar. Nicholas was the one to set the outline for Russia's ambiguous policy in the Far East, and he was the main force behind Russia's delayed response to the Japanese. He personally appointed Admiral Alexiev as the viceroy of the Far East and also supported Bezobrazov. These two personalities were not only in conflict with each other, but they also meddled with the work of the ministries in the capital. The tsar was convinced of the necessity to buy time following the maxim that "Russia stands to gain enormously by every year of peace, and therefore, every effort must be directed to warding off war."18 Yet, he neither accommodated the Japanese nor complied with his viceroy's request for mobilization. Had the tsar perceived the repercussions of the imminent crisis accurately, confrontation could have been delayed, or even totally avoided, through agreements similar to those with Japan in 1907 without ceding more than a fraction of the tsar's ambition. Had the tsar realized the full military potential of his enemy, Russia could have prepared better for war, and strategic decisions, such as the dispatch of the Baltic squadron, could have been made in time.19

The tsar's fundamental responsibility, however, was due to his absolute power; his authority was dictated by the form of his regime. "The Emperor is an autocratic and unlimited monarch," stated Article I of the Fundamental State Laws established by Tsar Nicholas I, and his great grandson Nicholas II was determined to maintain this principle.20 The decisive element in the tsar's personality, writes the historian Raymond Esthus, was "his conviction that he had been chosen by God to rule as an autocrat and to defend the honor and worth of Russia."21 Indeed, the tsar alone nominated the members of the Ministerial Council and held each of them independently and personally responsible. Similar to his predecessors, Nicholas did not appoint a prime minister and rarely consulted his ministers. In spite of their role as the tsar's advisers, members of the council never confronted him as a united body. None of them, wrote the Russian diplomat Eugene de Schelking, "could boast that they really knew his mind."

Nicholas' governmental style had an aversive effect on foreign affairs, splitting decision-making and actual command between several committees, ministries, and trusted aides. In a few years he learned the Machiavellian art of running the ministers against each other and turning them into distrustful factions who were "doing as much damage as possible to the other ministers."22 "Everything is done spasmodically, haphazardly, under the influence of the moment," confided Alexander Polovtsov, a member of the Council of State, in 1901: "The young Tsar
Nicholas II and the Japanese Body  219

The autocratic path Nicholas increasingly embraced stemmed also from his own authoritarian personality, which was nurtured throughout his upbringing. Although authoritarianism was almost a requisite of the tsarist regime, it ultimately exerted a negative effect on Nicholas' decision-making process. Authoritarian people tend to show low tolerance for ambivalence and have an acute need for unequivocal interpretations even when vital information is missing. To fulfill this need they rely heavily on stereotyping. Authoritarianism is often associated with two other impediments to accurately evaluate reality. First, it is associated with ethnocentrism, which leads to an inflated evaluation of self and a negatively biased judgment of others. And second, it is closely tied with dogmatism, the tendency to view issues in black-and-white terms and to ignore information that disconfirms one's beliefs. Finally, authoritarian people tend to impose their view on their subordinates, while they are ready to conform to a higher authority. As a quintessential authoritarian, Nicholas was to display all these cognitive flaws on the eve of the war. Lacking any peer or trusted advisor, he treated God as his only higher authority, and as a loyal subordinate he felt he was carrying on a divine mission.

Historians tend to characterize Nicholas II as weak and irresolute. Emile Dillon, for example, suggested that "the emperor's inability to govern, might, perhaps have passed unnoticed if he had allowed any man of intellect and will-power in his stead to grapple with the jarring elements." Nicholas' court chancellor, Alexander Morsolov, thought the tsar never adopted a definite energetic attitude, and, likewise, the diplomat Eugene Schelking suggested that Nicholas' indecisiveness was the fault of his mother who instilled in him "a lack of decision in every act which became the tragedy of his entire existence." The poet Alexander Block wrote of him "Stubborn but will-less, nervous but deadened to everything, with no trust left in people, worried and cautious in words, he was not master of himself."

Nevertheless, much of the historical judgment of Nicholas II was written after his demise and was based on his actions and decisions during the onset of World War I and the Soviet revolution. This

is filled more and more with contempt for the organs of his own power and begins to believe in the beneficent force of his absolute power, asserting it sporadically, without preparatory debate, without connection with the general movement of affairs." Some of Nicholas' contemporaries attributed extensive influence to the Grand Dukes, yet careful analysis shows that they had little importance in determining any of the tsar's decisions. Even Witte, the powerful minister and the last legacy of the previous tsar, was dismissed by Nicholas in 1903. Nicholas' childhood provides us with certain clues to his future conduct as a decision-maker. This period was characterized by his shyness and timidity, which some biographers attribute to the great disappointment his parents had expressed following the premature death of his brother Alexander. Although his family relations were warm, the general atmosphere at the suburban palace was gloomy, and there was constant talk about attempts on the life of the members of the tsar's family. Considerably intelligent and with a good memory, Nicholas suffered from a formalistic education, which emphasized knowledge of facts, as well as from his isolation from other children. As a tsar, Nicholas displayed an aloof attitude toward the public and showed difficulties in developing close relations with people outside his immediate family. At Tsarskoye Selo, about 15 miles from the capital, he led a self-contained middle-class family life. Surrounded only by a small group of advisers and servants, with whom he kept extremely rigid relationships and petty formalism, Nicholas' isolation and daily habits were instrumental in keeping his world-view intact.

When his father died at the age of 49, Nicholas was caught totally unprepared for the role. Politics had not entered the house of Alexander III, and the crown prince was kept almost persistently out of state affairs. Watching his father—the tall, physically powerful, and charismatic tsar—had probably filled the inexperienced and relatively small Nicholas with a strong sense of inadequacy. This feeling can be found, perhaps, in his insecure manner as a young tsar, as well as in his future relations with charismatic yet arrogant people such as Witte, the German Kaiser William II, and his towering uncles.
assessment may have little relevance to our case. In fact, during the
decade Nicholas ruled Russia prior to the Russo-Japanese War, his
performance was much more energetic and resolute when compared to
his later years. Nicholas’ pre-war management of the Far Eastern affairs
was marked by strong initiative and determination that was set almost
from the very beginning of his reign and excelled over any efforts he
made in other domains. He was, in Witte’s words, “anxious to spread
Russian influence in the Far East—not that he had a definite program
of conquest. He was merely possessed by an unreasonable desire to seize
Far-Eastern lands.” After his visit to Japan, Nicholas headed to Siberia
where he inaugurated the new line and spent three months learning the
region. Two years later, he was appointed to the only official post he
held prior to his ascent to the throne: president of the Trans-Siberian
Committee. With the untimely death of Alexander III in 1894, the new
tsar, Nicholas II, remained overly dedicated to the development of
Siberia and to the completion of the railway.43
Nicholas’ experience in the East and his role in the development of
the Siberian railway were closely tied with his adherence to the
imperialist idea that Russia had a “historical mission” of spreading
western culture in the Orient. His attitude toward the East was nourished
by Prince Esper Esperevich Ukhtomsky, one of the most influential
early exponents of Russian expansion in Asia.44 “For Russia there is no
other course,” wrote Ukhtomsky a decade before the war, “than either
to become what she is destined to be—a great power uniting the West with
the East, or ingloriously and imperceptibly to tread the downward path.”45
For this passion and supposed knowledge, Ukhtomsky was
chosen by Tsar Alexander III to join Nicholas on his voyage as a guide
and mentor, and after their return the two remained in close contact.46

At the eve of the war, Russia was ruled by a determined autocrat, who
was surrounded by toady advisers. His messianic dedication to Asian
expansion, aggravated by his autocratic conviction, outlined Russian
foreign policy in the Far East throughout the decade that preceded the
war. The tsar’s uncontested world-view had immense importance in
determining the last stages of diplomatic negotiations with Japan and the

final military preparations. When Japan turned out to be the last barrier
to Russia’s ambitions, Nicholas’ perception of the Japanese became
naturally a vital component of his actual decision-making process. The
Russian approach to Japan, in Ian Nish’s words, “was similar to that
toward other parts of East Asia, namely, superiority and a desire for
assimilation.” Having meager and conservative intelligence sources,
the view of Japan held by the Russians in general and the tsar in
particular had been molded through the prisms of their own colonial
experience and the contemporary Western images of the Japanese. Yet,
Nicholas felt he had one advantage that almost none of his advisers
possessed: he had seen the Japanese in their courtyard 13 years earlier.
That experience made him believe that he knew the enemy better than
others.44 So, it becomes critical to ask: How did he see the Japanese in
his visit, and what was his image of them before the war?

The Childish, Feminine, and Inferior Japanese
One of the reasons for Nicholas’ elusiveness is the scarcity of
historical sources related directly to him. His laconic and uninspiring
diary, for example, has been truly “the despair of his biographers.”47 His
frugal writing during his voyage and his silence about it later were not
an exception. Thus, he left us with virtually no oral or written personal
testimony about his impressions of Japan.48 Nonetheless, much of the
experience and scenes he was exposed to were recorded scrupulously by
Prince Esper Ukhtomsky, whose diaries and reflections appeared in two
colossal volumes, which were revised personally by Nicholas before
their publication.49 This rare memoir of the Russian outlook of the East
at the close the 19th century is vital to a reconstruction of young
Nicholas’ views. Furthermore, when supplemented by testimonies of
Nicholas’ aides, as well as by content analysis of some of the European
literature that the Russian aristocracy was much exposed to, it may
enable us to reconstruct partly the psychocultural milieu in which the
tsar shaped his attitudes toward the Japanese in the years that preceded
the war.
Ukhtomsky’s impressions throughout the long voyage, primarily set in territories dominated by European powers, reveal the colonial condescension and fascination so typical of European writings about the Orient at that time. “The European life we just forsaken,” Ukhtomsky noted in Egypt, “lies somewhere far behind. A dead wall has risen up between us and it. A new and unknown charm breathes upon us from the surrounding gloom, whence the restless flame of the torches strikes the eye.” The commotion of the Egyptian crowd, even the mere sight of barbarians, half-savaged Arabs, strange people, in their peculiar and picturesque attire, as Ukhtomsky referred to the native population, were a source of incessant enchantment: “How fascinating are these Orientals!” In India, the local scene did not differ much: Thousands of strange people, “Half-naked, dusky people, with worn faces... ugly and miserable torch-bearers... half savage-troops,” and all of them, he felt, were constantly on the move.

For centuries, Asia, or rather the distorted image of this continent, was a problematic element in the Russian elite’s self-definition. Russians saw themselves as Europeans, and as they advanced toward the Pacific, they sought acutely to establish clear boundaries between them and Asia. Regardless of its recent transformation, Nicholas and his entourage regarded Japan as just another station in a long chain of Asian nations they visited. Through the eyes of Ukhtomsky, the young crown prince could not ignore some signs of modernization in the country but remained skeptical regarding the significance of such changes. “Just now everything in this country is full of unexpected and contradictory contrasts,” Ukhtomsky remarked, “The Japanese, suddenly assuming a place amid the civilized nations of the world, appear to the unprejudiced eye altogether incomprehensible in their rooted tendency to exalt in their most secret thoughts and feelings for their ancient world, barbarous as it seems to a foreign eye, while at the same time grasping at all foreign novelties; while carrying their imitation of contemporary Europe and America to the greatest extremes.”

Nicholas first landed in Nagasaki, a port the Russians were using as a coaling station and as a winter shelter for their Pacific Squadron. The Russian ships used to lay off Inasa, also known as the Russian Village, where life was gay and morality was considered low. It was Easter, and Nicholas fasted in his ship and did not land officially. Unofficially, however, he went ashore incognito the day after his arrival and wandered around Inasa with a few other young officers. Count Benckendorff described in his memoir the typical activities of the Russians before the war: “I did in Nagasaki all the things customary for a young naval man first in Japan: I bought innumerable trifles, made the acquaintance of geishas in all their aspects, musical and otherwise.”

Nicholas probably heard a lot about Inasa, as three years earlier his cousin and future brother-in-law, Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, had experienced a long and unforgettable stay in that quarter. The experience Alexander acquired in Japan deserves close examination because he and Nicholas were on intimate terms since childhood, and one should expect that the tales of this vivacious cousin made a strong impression on the two-years-younger crown prince before and after his own visit.

Alexander, who served as a second lieutenant on the H.I.M.S. Rynda, arrived in Nagasaki in 1887. His ship was to be stationed there intermittently for the next two years, and the crew was looking forward to a life of comfort in accordance with the navy’s legend about the place. They did not have to wait long. The moment Alexander and his crew arrived, they were called on by officers (whom they were going to replace) who were stationed in Nagasaki and narrated “thrilling tales of the two years spent by them in Japan.” Nearly all of them had Japanese wives; no ceremony of marriage had been performed, but they lived with their native consorts in the miniature houses bearing the appearance of a toyland.

During the same period, the Frenchman Julian Viaud, better known by his pseudonym Pierre Loti, was making his first strides in other brothels in Nagasaki. His animated impressions were assembled in an influential novel called Madame Chrysanthème, published first in French in 1887. Widely read among the Russian aristocracy, Loti provided a mouth to the lowest common denominator of the Western
images of the Japanese. A naval officer similar to Alexander and Loti himself, his protagonist was looking forward to the jewels of Nagasaki: “I shall choose a little yellow-skinned woman with black hair and cat’s eyes. She must be pretty. Not much bigger than a doll.”

Settling in Nagasaki, Loti became disenchanted rapidly about his marriage plans: “But, good gracious, how ugly, mean and grotesque all those folk were.” Still, the women represented another species for Loti, who followed a long tradition of viewing the Orient in feminine and sensual terms. Upon his first meeting with a dancing girl he was instantly impressed: “She rolls her eyes like a timid kitten, and then all at once tamed, nestles against me, with a coaxing air of childishness, which is a delightfully transparent assumption.” In a teahouse in Kyoto, Nicholas and Ukhtomsky could watch similar dancers: “The play of their fans is far more eloquent than their frozen smiles and vacant gaze! This is neither dance nor promenade, but merely a monotonous, purely Oriental pantomime.”

Nowadays, perhaps, we can hardly conceive of the spell Japanese women had on Victorian men. Yet, at that time Japan was strongly associated in the West with feminine qualities. Numerous books and plays on this topic were created; the historian Jean-Pierre Lehmann concludes “the popular Western image of the Japanese woman was something beautiful, exotic, of easy virtue, and frivolous; she was there to conquer, to enjoy and to abandon.” That was exactly the attitude of Alexander, who years later could still remember his initial sensation: “We watched with natural curiosity the behavior of the toy-women. They laughed all of the time and participated in our singing.” For a while he hesitated to join his comrades but eventually was persuaded to choose a mate: “As far as I was concerned,” he felt, “they all looked alike. Smiling, flapping dolls.” Alexander made his choice and never regretted his glorious exploits in Japan. His cousin, the romantically frustrated Nicholas, could boast of only a limited vicarious experience.

Two Japanese matrons were sent to serve the crown prince and the officers around him during their unofficial visits in town. One of the two women was a middle-aged restauranteur, who, for years, had been supplying the Russians with young girls. The younger one was still pretty, and one of Nicholas’ companions was courting her, apparently with success. Nicholas could only watch. In public, he was to represent the throne, and as a devoted Christian, and later as a dedicated family man, morality was a troubling but certainly not a light issue for him. In his future demeanor, at least, he demonstrated steadfastly his Victorian belief that “there should be discipline and unobtrusiveness in all sexual activity.” Still, as a young man hungry for adventure, it is almost certain that he felt some attraction to such loose women mixed with a contempt for the immoral society that allowed such open licentiousness.

This strong feminine image of the Japanese led observers to forget Japan’s militant past and to see feminine qualities in the population as a whole. Many early visitors regarded the members of the Samurai class as effeminate. For others, even muscular jinrikisha carriers conveyed an idea of effeminacy which is not altogether pleasing. Femininity and soft character were closely related to childishness—also centrally part of Western images of the Japanese. “Everyone, in these days,” said Baron Joseph von Hübner epitomizing the general image of his day, “knows that Japanese people are gentle, amiable, civil, gay, good-natured, and childish.” One reason was the ubiquitous sight of children: “Japanese streets, generally speaking,” Ukhtomsky wrote, “swarm with children: shaved little babies (with two or three locks of hair on their heads) hang at the backs of the elder children, sometimes not much older than themselves.”

Childishness was also associated with physical smallness. For the short Loti, the critical aspect in the portrayal of the Japanese was their stature, and hardly any Japanese escaped the prefix little. Such is the case with the little policemen, set of little beings; a very high functionary, a ridiculous little old fellow in a black coat; and a legion of little Japanese workmen. Other writers, such as the British politician and world traveler Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, expressed difficulties in realizing whether “the Japanese are real men and women.” So strong was the inference of “the smallness of the people, their incessant
laughing chatter, and their funny gestures," that “one feels one’s self in elf-land.” 31

The almost romantic statement of Dilke that “All who love children must love the Japanese, the most gracious, the most courteous, and the most smiling of all peoples” is an excellent example of the haughty paternalism so common in the colonialist attitude toward the natives. 32 Indeed, for many Westerners, the relationship with the Japanese was perceived in parent-child terms, and the Russian visitors were not an exception. 33 “The child of the ‘Land of the Rising Sun’,,” Ukhtomsky wrote, “instinctively feels in us a part of that vast spiritual world which mystics as well as pedantic scholar call by that vague name ‘the East’. ” Still, on other occasions, the scholar prince was less familial and regarded the Japanese in class terms. “There seems to be nothing easier for Russians than to get on with Asians,” Ukhtomsky recorded in his diary, adding that “the Japanese and the lower-class Russian stand nearer to each other than to Europeans.” And like any member of the lower class, these people understood best the language of power. “With the spread of education in the ‘Land of the Rising Sun’, ” he concluded, “the people have gained a very fair idea of what the boundless Russia of the Tsar is. The arrival of a powerful squadron and the reception of the Grand Duke have strengthened their figurative view of the foreign giant who has outgrown China.” Nicholas, more than any Russian before him, was “no longer the embryo of Russian power in the Far East that appears, but that power in the prime of its strength and influence.” 34

The tendency to view Japanese as children was partly an echo of the scientific bent of the 19th century, which looked at all non-White others as immature races. The theory of racial recapitulation was one of the many byproducts of the fervent search for easily recognizable physiological markers of White superiority. Its originator, the French anatomist Serres, suggested that superior races repeat the adult stage of inferior races during their own growth. In the same vein, he argued, adult Negroes, as an inferior race, resemble White children whereas Mongolians resemble White adolescents. 35 Seeing the Japanese as immature had an unmistakable racial flavor, yet soon racial images were to alter drastically. This turning point was Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution, whose main notion concerning continuity can be interpreted as indicating “the use of lower races to fill the gap between animals and man.” 36 Even though Darwin had not said that, he never really changed “his basic belief in a hierarchy of cultural advance, with white Europeans on top and natives of different colors on the bottom.” 37 In this scientific milieu, it was almost natural that European laymen started to perceive people of other races as ape-like, and toward the end of the 19th century this strong racial image, with a twist of cuteness, was applied toward the Japanese. Suddenly, they became “little monkeys.”

The simian image of the Japanese was the most obscene one as it played on the their supposedly imitating qualities as well as on evolutionary notions of racial hierarchy. 38 Once people were aware of the concept only little could prevent them from seeing the other as such. “In my childhood,” wrote Loti, “I was sometimes taken to the Learned Animals Theater, and I remember a certain Madame de Pompadour, a principal rôle, filled by a gaily dressed-up old monkey; Touki-San reminds me of her.” 39 Others were more explicit. “Of the habits and manners of the Japanese in regard to the sexes I see little,” wrote the American historian Henry Brooks Adams, who visited Japan in 1886, “for I cannot conquer a feeling the Japs are monkeys, and the women very badly made monkeys.” 40

Nicholas was quick to master this contemptuous image, making his first simian reference to the Japanese half a year after his visit to Japan. He used it in mundane talks, in official memoranda, and even when conversing with his children. 41 With very limited knowledge of Japan or competing images of the Japanese, 42 this European-made image penetrated deep into prewar Russian popular culture. 43 For the average Russian citizen, wrote the historian Sergei Oldenburg, “the Japanese were an enemy of no consequences—just ‘monkeys’.” 44 During the war, the Russian army distributed among its soldiers postcards mocking the Japanese as little apish children scolded by their Russian master. 45 In the rear as well, recalled Alexander Pasternak in his memoir, wartime posters depicted the Japanese as “knock-kneed weakling, slanted eyed,
and, for some reason, shaggy-haired—a puny kind of monkey, invariably dubbed ‘Japs’ and ‘macaques’. The Russians, in contrast, were depicted as giants, and the relations between the two peoples could not be better displayed than another memorable poster did. It displayed without captions “an Olympian hand” squeezing “a fistful of macaques, legs and arms writhing in their last agony.”

With the growing fascination with Japan, even those Westerners who were unaware of the physical or racial features of the Japanese could not escape a growing widespread feeling of oddity toward these people. Gilbert and Sullivan’s play *The Mikado*, for instance, was the big hit of London in 1885, and for years later it still played there and in other major European cities. “Our attitude queer and quaint—You’re wrong if you think it isn’t, oh!” announced the chorus of Japanese nobles in the beginning of the play. It was hardly related to Japan, but nobody, except for the Japanese Foreign Ministry, really cared. The same crowd that applauded *The Mikado* rejected several years later a more serious play, Sir Edwin Arnold’s *Adzuma*. Frederick Greenwood, a critic at the *Illustrated London News* commented that “the Japanese, distinguished as they are known to be from most enviable gifts and faculties, are ‘little Japs’ to the British public. They are stamped as ‘funny little Japs’.” *The Mikado* was a great success also in Russia. It was such a hit, in fact, that the Moscow *Artistic Theater*, which staged all Anton Tchekoff’s plays, chose it to begin its activity under the leadership of M. Stanislavski.

Oddity to the point of ridiculousness was also the impression of Grand Duke Alexander upon meeting the Japanese imperial family. With no remark on the dramatic modernization the country was experiencing, the Japan he saw was through the eyes of his wishful consort. It was at an imperial banquet in the capital where Alexander’s overbearing manner and misunderstanding of the people reached its climax. Placed on the right of the empress, he wanted naively to impress her with some local idioms he picked up in Nagasaki. “For a second,” he recalled later, “she looked astonished. I repeated my remark. She grinned.” After a few more sentences in that peculiar jargon, “A strange sound came out of the empress’ throat. She stopped eating and bit her lip. Then her shoulders shook. She began to laugh hystically.” The Japanese prince seated on her left “dropped his head. Large tears were streaming down his cheeks.” For Alexander, however, the banquet was remarkably amusing and noteworthy as the funniest experience in his life.

Altogether, the very idea of presenting Japanese as childish, feminine, and monkey-like people was a mere reflection of the inherent racist attitudes prevailing at this period in Europe, which viewed the Japanese, among other peoples, as an inferior race. Nicholas II, the analysis above suggests, was exposed to most of the contemporary racial and corporal images that Europeans held against the Japanese. Although he was impressed by Japan as a state, *vis-à-vis* other Asian countries, he compared the people with Europeans. As time passed, the strong images of people he perceived as vastly different and inferior remained. The set of stereotypes and visual images that Nicholas acquired was bound to evolve into a schemata, a general, abstracted cognitive structure that represented all the organized knowledge he had acquired about the Japanese. In daily life, such a cognitive mechanism is a useful tool because it is processed easily and enables people to predict the future even when certain data is missing. Its negative aspect, however, is that it chains people to a biased conception that may hinder them from perceiving slow changes or any other information that contradicts their view. As a pivotal decision-maker, Nicholas could not afford an overly biased schemata of his enemy at such a critical time. Nonetheless, due to his position, personality, and relative isolation, people around him regarded his world-view as sacred, and only few, if any, dared to challenge it.

### The Japanese as a Soldier

Cultural images often interfere with images in other domains, and so was the case with the particular image of the Japanese body. Perhaps, its strongest impact at that period was on Western and Russian assessments of Japanese military power. After the war, the British Army Captain Fred Sedgwick stated that “the little Japanese soldier...an average of eight
inches shorter than his opponent, was a partially unknown quantity." He was mistaken. In fact, much was written about the Japanese soldier during the late 19th century, but only little of it could help forecast the brilliant performance the Japanese army was to exhibit during the war.

Frequently, the mere view of Japanese soldiers evoked a big laugh among Western observers. They were dressed, many thought, in unfitting uniforms and behaved in a way some interpreted as feminine and childish. "Europeans think it is very funny that on the march in hot days every Japanese soldier should use a fan." The Tokyo-based German physician Erwin Baelz wrote during the war, "I suppose the idea has arisen in Europe because fans are mostly used in ballrooms for the purpose of coquetry and adornment...it is supposed to be unworthy of a man to use a fan." Rudyard Kipling, who visited Japan twice in 1889 and 1892, expressed much less compassionate judgment. For him, the fans and dainty tea sets he noticed in an army barracks in Osaka, "do not go with one's notion of a barracks." Likewise, the weapons of one soldier he carefully examined were "much too big for the man," and his uniforms "would have made an English colonel swear. There was no portion of his body except the neck that it pretended to fit." Despite his initial sartorial impressions, the young author concluded that "the Japanese makes a trim little blue-jacket, but he does not understand soldiering."

In Tokyo, Kipling watched an army parade and sardonically remarked: "Their officers were as miserable a set of men as Japan could furnish—spectacled, undersized even for Japan, hollow-buckled and hump-shouldered." Despite their appearance, the Japanese infantry, Kipling believed, "should be as good as any troops recruited east of Suez," if they had a better rifle and were trained "under British officers instead of the little anatomies at present provided." His poignant sarcasm, however, was reserved for the Japanese cavalry: riders with white gloves on ponies "sure-footed as goats." Kipling could not stop laughing: "here was this blindly imitative nation trying to turn them into heavy cavalry." It was a pathetic scene, he felt: "They had to turn these rats into cavalry. They knew nothing about riding, and what they did know was wrong."

Kipling's account and in general his reference to the Japanese officers in particular mirrored the colonial viewpoints he had been exposed to in India. "Eastern races," opined Lord Roberts, "however brave and accustomed to war, do not possess the qualities that go to make good leaders of men." For that, he reasoned, native troops could flourish only under British officers. Lionel Caplan's study on the portrait of the legendary Gurkha soldiers in British military writings offers interesting similarities to the Western portraits of the Japanese soldier prior to the Russo-Japanese War. Although the Gurkhas were recognized as a martial race, their qualities could be revealed "only under the tutelage of British officers. At base, they were innocent, less than an adult, not fully grown." Caplan concludes that the "aspect of the discourse which depicts the Gurkhas as simple, juvenile, and dependent, so needing a firm hand, accords with the hierarchical relations obtained between them and their British officers."

Not all observers, of course, were totally blind to the changing reality. During his first visit in 1891, Sir Henry Norman noticed that "Tokyo was almost as full of soldiers as Metz." Much to his surprise, the soldiers were "neither so short nor so slight nor so well-behaved as I had expected, and their resemblance in dress and face and build to a company of South German recruits was startling at first sight." What was he expecting? "I visited almost every military institution, and inspected every arm of the service, expecting always to find something new to describe—some amusing or picturesque combination of East and West to chronicle. But the expectation was nowhere realized. Everywhere I went and everything I saw...I found just the same appearance, just the same drill, and just the same discipline as exist at home." Hence, Norman assessed: "The Japanese army is, in fact a European force and a body of any arm except the cavalry...might march through any town of continental Europe without being much remarked as foreign troops."

Indeed, the Japanese military advanced in giant leaps. As the outcome of the Sino-Japanese War became known, Norman wrote that Japan was
not taken seriously prior to the war. Even before the Sino-Japanese War some experts began to praise the training methods and battle performance of the Japanese artillery and the navy. Nevertheless, the image was changing too slowly, and many military observers, such as Georges de Man of the Belgian Embassy in Tokyo, remained unconvinced. As late as November 1902, he sent his government a lengthy report about the Japanese army. He was not very impressed. De Man criticized the level of studies in the military academy and contended that the officers had “only a very vague idea about European military science...They are most meticulous in insignificant details, but have no idea of the whole, and in unforeseen cases very quickly lose their heads.” Although de Man admitted that the Japanese soldier “is brave and scorns death,” he emphasized his docility, lack of discipline, and that “he has no endurance on marches and does not stand cold. His nourishment is bad and insubstantial.”

On meeting the captain of a German cruiser a year prior to the war, Dr. Baelz found that “our naval men have an unfortunate way of speaking of the Japanese as the ‘Japsen,’ which seems a great joke to them. The British and the Americans have ceased talking about the ‘Japs’. Now the Germans have taken over this unfortunate custom.” The British had to be more optimistic about their “little allies,” but they too were aware of certain scientific defects in the Japanese soldier. One of them was the prewar fable that the Japanese gunners suffered from a racial disadvantage: “the Japanese as a rule are not good marksmen, because the eyesight of the entire nation is more or less defective.” The men of the cavalry suffered from another racial symptom: They were “too round-thighed” echoed later a British observer. He could not, thus, consider them as “real’ horsemen.”

But rather than mere physical limitation, some Westerners indicated the existence of a more profound deficiency of the Japanese nation as a whole. “Japan is a great people,” Kipling summed up, “mercifully she has been denied the last touch of firmness in her character which would enable her to play with the whole round world.” Remarkably, a similar opinion was expressed almost a century earlier by Vasily Golovnin, a Russian skipper, who was imprisoned in Japan for two years. Impressed by the people, Golovnin thought the “Japanese are deficient in only one quality, which we reckon among the virtues, namely, bravery or courage.” This view eventually transcended into the international arena. “Russia,” wrote Nicholas’ mentor, when reviewing the power constellation between Russia and Japan at the turn of the century, “is too powerful and too full of firm faith in the future for her advance to be hindered by this state, sympathetic though it be to us Russians. It must be remembered that Japan is only pseudo-youthful, and that she is still greatly hampered by the elements of an effete, almost prehistoric civilisation.”

Well-informed travelers coming from Port Arthur and Manchuria were reporting that “Russian officers openly express their contempt of the Japanese army and their conviction it will not dare to attack Russia.” The American reporter Frederick McCormick, who reached the Russian stronghold one month before the attack, had “the uncomfortable experience of hearing the Japanese disparaged and unreasonably belittled.” What was somewhat peculiar, he recalled later, was the fact that “the greatness, benevolence and power of Russia, and the strength of the Eastern Empire was not more emphasized than was the littleness, presumption and conceit of the Japanese.” These attitudes certainly stemmed from high-ranking officers, who had been to Japan or were exposed to reports and literature on the topic. “I do not know why, but we always believed in the invulnerability of our fleet,” admitted Colonel Nikolai Tretjakov, who played an important role in the defense of the fort, “if any one stated that the Japanese fleet was considerably stronger than ours, our tellers of fairy tales would contumaciously answer...and we listeners, satisfied with such arguments, were quickly laughing and joking and telling stories.” Even the legendary Admiral Makaroff, the commander of the Pacific Squadron during the first stage of the war, held similar opinions. A few years before the onset of the drama, he was met by Dr. Baelz, an old Japan-hand. The two had discussed the military qualities of various nations, including those of the Russians and the Japanese, and Baelz
noted that "he considered that I thought far too highly of these last."  

Worse than the military assessment was the almost mystical belief among the Russian top echelon that the Japanese would not dare to attack them. One of the most important assessments of the Japanese army before the war was by General Aleksei Kuropatkin, who made a "tour of personal inspection" in Tokyo in June 1903. Kuropatkin reviewed some army drills and held meetings with top officers. Back in St. Petersburg, he submitted an "all well report," saying, Grand Duke Alexander recalled later, that "the Japanese Army was a colossal joke, a product of the fertile imagination of its British press agents. Port Arthur could withstand a ten-year siege, our fleet was certain to give 'the licking of this life' to the Mikado." In private as well, Kuropatkin was confident of Russia's prospects: "They will not dare; they are unprepared," the finance minister during the war Vladimir Kokovtsov heard him saying, "they are only putting on airs, thinking that we shall be frightened, and shall believe them."  

The Russian military confidence was based partly on the conviction that their soldiers were much superior to the Japanese on individual terms. The question for some was merely arithmetic: How many Japanese soldiers are equivalent to one Russian? In his memoir, Witte mentioned an argument between General Kuropatkin and the former War Minister Vannovski on the number of Russian soldiers required to challenge the Japanese offensive: "While General Kuropatkin believed that the proportion of our army to the Japanese should be two to three, the former minister thought that one Russian soldier would hold his own against two Japanese." Kuropatkin himself admitted later that the "Japanese experts" in Vladivostok asserted "that we might count one Russian soldier as being as good as three Japanese." Even the Russian minister in Tokyo, Roman Rosen, by no means a hard-liner, was heard saying 10 days before the war broke: "we had only to mobilize one Division and the Japanese will climb down."  

In such an atmosphere it is not a surprise that the tsar was not fully alarmed till the last moment. Viewing the Japanese as physically weak and feminine toy soldiers, small monkeys who played with Western technology, Nicholas II did not believe that they would dare to attack a Western foe and, thus, did not heed the Japanese warnings. In his worldview, there was no place for truly aggressive Japanese, and when confronted with a great power, as in 1895, they would yield. Hence, any contradictory information, such as the Japanese performance during the Sino-Japanese War or the Boxer Uprising, was denied processing. After all, their rivals were only the Chinese.  

Surrounded mostly by advisors conditioned to tell him what he wanted to hear, and believing in his absolute power and judgment, nothing could change his course. For the Grand Duke Alexander, the tsar's insistence on the Japanese timidity was unforgettable. One month before the war he brought up the delicate matter during their meeting: "People claim, Nicky, that war is at hand. Are you still of the same determination to avoid the war at no matter what cost?" The tsar first avoided answering and finally replied dryly, "There is no question of war." The duke reformulated his question: "But how can you prevent the Japanese from declaring war unless you yield to their demands?" The tsar repeated, "The Japanese are not going to declare war on Russia." "Who will stop them," retorted Alexander. The tsar did not change his position: "They won't dare to." Finally, shortly before war, he assured the Kaiser William II that no war was impending simply because he "did not wish it."  

Nicholas' military image of the Japanese was not the result of lack of information. "Russia of course had sources of information," argues Ian Nish in the last page of his book, "But for some reason which is not clear, she was not so skillful in evaluating Japan's strengths and weaknesses." In fact, there was a good reason: a strong cognitive bias, which associated negative corporal images with spiritual courage and martial capability. So prevalent was the bias that it infected the judgment of almost any Russian, both at the forefront and at the rear.  

Thus, the Tsar's determination was plainly biased by his refusal to conceive of the Japanese fighting against Russia, and his confidence echoed inevitably at the front. The Russian main post in Port Arthur was neglectfully unprepared against possible Japanese attack. The majority
of the troops in the coastal defense posts did not participate in a drill for a surprise attack, and many did not even know their assigned positions. The High Command did not impose a news blackout, and the Japanese population in the town remained there until the day of the attack. Despite warnings that the Japanese were preparing for war, a number of Russian vessels remained in Japanese ports. The news about the diplomatic rupture reached the rank and file on February 8, and anxious officers streamed into the viceroy's residence. They were told by his diplomatic advisor Eugeny Planson that there was not going to be any war.137 Hours before the war began, half of the navy officers were allowed ashore at any given time until 8 p.m.—even on that day. Less than one hour before the attack a small despatch boat came alongside the Russian Squadron flagship and delivered the navy ministry's summary and analysis of the current political situation. Its conclusion was short: “The negotiations were going well and that any fear of armed conflict was a mere chimera.”138

...And Then Came the War

On the eve of the attack on Port Arthur, the tsar attended the opera. “Life in the capital,” wrote Count Vladimir Kokovtsov, “went on as always except that there were more festivities than usual.”139 As he was given reports on the Japanese strike, Nicholas penned the marginal note: “This is absolutely absurd.”140 A day later, the tsar’s reactions swung from disbelief to derision. Discussing the situation with his foreign minister, Nicholas still asked, “Did you think this possible?”141 Others, however, were impressed by the tsar’s placid manner. He remarked that the assault was not more than a “bite of a flea,” and hoped that war “would inspire patriotic sentiments” and end the “anti-monarchical agitation.”142

Even in Port Arthur, only few were bothered by the noise of the Japanese bombardment on Russian vessels only a few miles away. Most of the inhabitants, noticed Frederick McCormick, “remained unconscious of their significance until the ninth, for it had not been believed that the first, or for that matter, any attack, would be made at Port Arthur.”143 The Viceroy Alexiev, who earlier warned about the Japanese preparations, received the news with disbelief and is said to have shouted “impossible!”144

Once the initial shock was over, the Russians began to show euphoric confidence, and in the following months generals and politicians kept assuring the public that the enemy’s success was only short-lived and the Russian army would recover.145 Viacheslav Plehve, the interior minister, made his notorious remark about the benefits of a war in distracting the masses from political questions paraphrased as a quest for “a little victorious war.”146 Similarly radiant with expectations was General Kuropatkin, the newly appointed commander-in-chief, who boasted he needed “only to assemble the army and that there was not the slightest doubt as to victory over the macaques.”147 Even Witte, who would later blame the tsar alone for the war, was still optimistic enough in June 1904 to discuss with the British ambassador the terms Russia intended to impose on Japan after its victory.148

At the front, Russian generals regarded the Japanese as monkeys even up to the battle of Mukden, but many of the warriors were clearly more realistic, and one could not miss the admiration they gradually felt for the Japanese soldiers. “Men who had expressed a savage desire for the extermination of the Japanese,” the American correspondent Frederick McCormick noted when the news on the fate of the Baltic Squadron came to his camp, “exclaimed: ‘who would have thought the Japanese so strong?’ While their own critics reminded them that this was no longer an affair with monkeys, but with men.”149

The Japanese combat performance amazed not only Russia but the West as a whole. The French, Russia’s closest ally, were totally surprised, wrote the journalist Rene Marchand in February 1905 “and each day awaited with increasing anxiety the news of a victory which would definitively mark the arrest of the yellow invasion—the annihilation of the little Japanese by the Northern Colossus. This victory has not been achieved and we are astonished.”150
For many, the conceptual transformation of the Japanese was a slow and painful process. At first, only very few observers were willing to admit that it was not Japan that was at fault, but its image. “That is the trouble at the root of the present situation,” wrote the Tokyo correspondent of the Times in February 1904, “the past inability of the West to take Japan seriously.” The British, naturally, knew the Japanese well, the correspondent assessed, however, other nations “still were pleased to look upon the Japanese through the eyes of the aesthetic penman and thought of the nation as a people of pretty dolls dressed in flowered silks and dwelling in paper houses of the capacity of matchboxes...a people to be toyed with, humoured when they are peevish, subdued by threats when they are disobedient.” In Paris, Maurice Paleologue, a high-ranking official in the French Foreign Ministry at that time, also noted in May 1904: “The Russians are today paying a heavy price for their jokes and jeers about the nasty little Nippon monkeys.”

Toward the end of the war, however, a growing number of Western observers sensed the Russian fiasco was connected to images of the Japanese. For Alexander Halot, the French ex-consult in Japan, the root of the misconception was in the Japanese body: “There were many bedroom strategists who recognized some quality in the Japanese fleet because it came from Europe, but they were reluctant to concede even for one moment that the small Japanese could resist the big Russian...Only the size of the Japanese,” he concluded, “made other nations to perceive them so diminutive as if through the wrong side of a telescope.” Likewise, the German political writer Baron Wilhelm von Falkenegg conceded immediately after the war: “Our attitude towards the Chinese and the Japanese were so lacking in logic and understanding of the natural tendencies, the historical development and the dangerous aspirations of the Mongolians...And the Japanese, ‘the little Japs’, were regarded from above as little schoolboys...(we) were delighted when the cute, polite, little people, who looked so harmless, left with a pleasant smile. We were deluded, so future historians will judge.”

Acute Russian soldiers such as Lieutenant General Tretyakov held a similar opinion. “To our mistakes, to our own blindness, and not to the enemy’s valour,” he wrote four years after the conclusion of the war, “I attribute our debacle.” With the benefit of hindsight, also some of the tsar’s assistants were candidly retrospective. Witte, for example, remarked in his memoir on the high “extent of optimism [which] prevailed among our military leaders at the beginning of the war and how we undervalued the fighting capacity of the Japanese.” General Kuropatkin dedicated one chapter in his apologia to the success of the Japanese, predicting correctly that “many historians will probably essay to solve the riddle how a Power, which we regarded as belonging to the second class...was able to crush us absolutely on the sea, and to defeat a strong force on land.” “Broadly speaking,” Kuropatkin acknowledged, “we underestimated her power, particularly her moral strength, and entered upon the war far too lightly.” Speaking of expectation, he concluded, “We did less than the world expected of us, and the Japanese did more.”

Nicholas, however, was not as reflective. Confident of his army, he was immovable throughout the war in his insistence to continue until the final victory. Esthus suggests that this persistence was “in order to preserve the honor and dignity of Russia.” While this was partly the case, the war was not the only way to save the nation’s honor. What kept the war going was rather the unshakable image Nicholas II harbored of the weak Japanese, which illuminated the prospects of a victory and made war seem the best means to achieve his goals. On October 10, 1904, he sent a telegram written in English to the kaiser: “You may be sure that Russia shall fight this war to the end, until the last Jap is driven out of Manchuria.” Paradoxically, Nicholas’ lingering image made him a tough negotiator at the Portsmouth Peace Conference, an attitude that was instrumental eventually in diminishing Russia’s strategic losses.

The repercussions of the war were not visible immediately. The Russian military defeat was partly compensated by the negotiation skills of Witte at Portsmouth, and soon Russia was active again in Manchuria. The damage was mainly internal. During the war, public dissatisfaction could not be checked, and the resulting 1905 revolution bore the tsarist
demean 12 years later. Nicholas himself never regained the confidence
he had before the war, and, personally, he was destined to pay the
heaviest price for his sightless decisions.

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Endnotes

1. On the Otsum Incident, see Ienaga, Saburo, "Kojima Iken to Otsum Jiken" [Kojima Iken
and the Otsum Incident], Nihon Rekishi 218 (July 1966); Kojima, Iken, Otsum Jiken Nissi
[Diary of the Otsum Incident], ed. Ienaga, Saburo (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971); George
Alexander Lenssen, "The Attempt on the Life of Nicholas II in Japan," The Russian
Hidden History of the Attempted Assassination of Future Emperor Nicholas II of Russia
in the Town of Otsum, May 11, 1891 and Its Implication for Historical Analysis" (Ph.D.

2. The most famous example of the public feeling is a young woman, Hatakeyama
Yuko, who, as a gesture of apology, committed suicide in front of the government
building of Kyoy Prefecture.

3. Suggestions regarding a possible causality between the assault and Nicholas' hostilities
lead to the Japanese were brought by Mohammed Essad-Bey, Nicholas II (New
Dynasty (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1970), 327; David Walder, The Short
1973), 48; Ben Ami Shillony, The Jews and the Japanese: The Successful Outsiders
(Rutland & Tokyo: Tuttle, 1992), 78. On a possible causality between the assault and the
war, see Edward Crankshaw, The Shadow of the Winter Palace (New York: The Viking
Press, 1976), 305; Raymond A. Esthus, Double Eagle and Rising Sun: The Russians and

4. Sergei Iu Witte, The Memoirs of Count Witte (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page,
1921), 186.

5. Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky, The Memoirs of Alexander Izvolsky (London:
Hutchinson & Co., 1920), 251.

6. For a first-hand testimony on the physical legacy of the injury, see Mathilde

7. For Nicholas' reluctance to speak on the assault, see Witte, The Memoirs of Count
Witte. 186. On his general hatred "to confide his ideas to anybody," see Alexander
Alexandrovoch Moselov, At the Court of the Last Tsar: Being the Memoirs of A. A.
Moselov (London: Methuen, 1935), 13. The imperial family used to commemorate the
event each year by a service of thanksgiving for his deliverance, yet the only time
Nicholas mentioned the Otsum Incident in his diary was on April 29, 1896, at the fifth
anniversary of the incident: "Otsum. After a stroll we went to a prayer in the red drawing-
room; I fervently thanked God for the salvation which he granted me through the hands
of Georgie [his Greek cousin] in Japan." In Nicholas II, Dnevnik Imperatora Nikolay II,
1890-1906 [The Diary of Emperor Nicholas II, 1890-1906] (Berlin: Knigzengatater stvo
"Stolov," 1923), 122.

8. Reading a letter from the Tsar the Kaiser confided to his Chancellor von Biilow, two
weeks before the outbreak of the war, that "he feared that the Tsar would never let it come
to a war with Japan." In Fürst Bernhard von Biilow, Memoirs of Prince von Biilow, 4 vols.

9. Tsarist Russia commemorated the anniversary of the Otsum Incident in a holiday. It
was marked on civil and military calendars, and throughout the country peaceful thank-
giving services were conducted. See M. Eager, Six Years at the Russian Court (London:
Hurst Blackett, 1906), 213.

10. On Nicholas' simian image of the Japanese, see note 86.

11. Rumors and fears rose especially due to the arrival of a strong Russian Squadron of
seven warships, Nicholas' one-week stop at the bay of Nagasaki prior to his landing in
Japan, his detour to Kagoshima the center of a civil war 14 years earlier, and his longer
route via the Inland Sea from Kagoshima to Kobe, see Shin, The Otsum Incident, 46-63.

12. This conclusion that the Otsum Incident was the beginning of a strife between the
two countries is in dissonance with Lenssen, who states that "the result of the incident was
a deepening of the entente cordiale between the two empires." In Lenssen, The Attempt,
251.

13. This part and the following sequence that led to the war is based on Peter Duns,
The Abacu and the Sword (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); George
Alexandre Lenssen, Balance of Intrigue: International Rivalry in Korea and Manchuria,
1884-99 (Tallahassee, Fla.: The Diplomatic Press, 1982); Andrew Malozemoff, Russian
For Eastern Policy. 1881-1904, With Special Emphasis on the Causes of the Russo-
Japanese War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Ian Nish. The Origins of
the Russo-Japanese War (London: Longman, 1983); Boris Alexandrovitch Romanov,
Russia in Manchuria, 1892-1906 (Am Arbor, Mich.: J.W. Edwards, 1952); John Albert

14. For the Japanese oversensitivity to foreign interference in their supposed sphere of
influence, see Duns, The Abacu and the Sword, 15-18.

15. On the Japanese decision-making at this stage, see Okamoto Shumpei. The
Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War (New York: Columbia University
Press, 1970); On the Japanese general approach to Korea, see Duns, The Abacus and the Sword.


18. In essence, the tsar was not necessarily against war, but he wanted it to break out at his convenience. According to the recollections of William II, Nicholas had told him in the summer of 1902 that in 1904 he would declare war on Japan, in Oskar P. Trautmann, Die Süstebrücke; Gedanken zur Russischen Außenpolitik, 1870-1914 [The Süstebrücke: Reflections on the Russian Foreign Politics] (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1940), 142.

19. The American military analyst Alfred Mahan believed that the failure of the tsar was in obtaining delay. Delay, he suggested, could have enabled Russia to gather her resources and let the Baltic Squadron unite with the Pacific Squadron. In Alfred T. Mahan, "Captain Mahan on Port Arthur's Defense," Review of Reviews 30 (October 1904): 470-72, "If Russia accedes to all of Japan's claims," wrote the Belgian Minister in Tokyo d'Anethan in November 1903, "war evidently will be postponed or perhaps even avoided." See an excerpt from a dispatch of d'Anethan to de Faveureau, No. 156/80, 18 October 1903, in Alexander George Lensen, ed., The d'Anethan Dispatches from Japan, 1894-1910 (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1967), 168.


22. For the very limited role Nicholas assigned to his ministers, see Mossoi, At the Court, 10-11; also Eugene de Schelking, Recollections of a Russian Diplomat: The Suicide of Monarchies (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 110-11.

23. "Ministers whom the emperor had to dismiss frequently complained that he was "undependable." "In Oldenburg, Last Tsar: 1:38; Kurokhatkin recorded in his diary a rare example for the low trust Nicholas had for his ministers. When the war minister tendered his resignation to the tsar in August 1903, he expressed the hope that Nicholas's confidence in him would only increase "should he cease to be a minister." According to Kurokhatkin, the tsar replied, "really, you know, as much as it may seem strange, this is perhaps psychologically correct." In Kurokhatkin, 1923, in Kresnyi Arkhiv, 2:40, entry for August 4, 1903, cited by Romanov, 1952, 309.


25. For the low profile of the grand dukes, see a letter (no. 8821/31) from Sir Arthur Nicholson to Sir Edward Grey, dated from October 7, 1906, in Domnina Lieven, ed., British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print: Russia 1859-1914, 6 vols. (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1983), 4:232-33; see also Esthus, Double Eagle, 3-4.

26. Witte's dismissal, the scholar and Witte's friend Emilie Dillon wrote: "Nicholas II had no minister, Russia no leader." In Emilie Joseph Dillon, The Eclipse of Russia (New York: G. H. Doran, 1918), 341.

27. On Nicholas's family atmosphere, see Grand Duke Alexander, Once a Grand Duke (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1932), 165-87; Mossoi, At the Court, 5; Dominic Lieven, Nicholas II: Emperor of All the Russias (London: John Murray, 1993), 32-34.

28. On Nicholas's education, see Mark D. Steinberg & Vladimir M. Khristalev, The Fall of the Romanovs: Political Dreams and Personal Struggle in a Time of Revolution (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 4-5.

29. On Nicholas's isolation, see the testimony of the son of the court physician, in Gleb Botkin, The Real Romanovs, As Revealed by the Late Czar's Physician and His Son (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1931), 31; also in Lieven, Nicholas II mass-produced 40-42. On Nicholas's lack of friends, see Lieven, Nicholas II, 70. The tsar displayed a special obsession for the small details, apparently on the expanse of the "grand picture" as the following example tells. While never questioning the readiness of the army for war, the "first professional soldier in his empire" examined a new combat equipment by wearing it and walking alone 25 miles. Likewise, he avoided having a secretary, thus spending much of his precious time writing personal letters, sealing the envelopes, etc. In Mossoi, At the Court, 12-13, 21-23.

30. On Nicholas's helplessness after the death of his father, see Alexander, Once a Grand Duke, 168-69.

31. Due to Nicholas's relatively short stature, the minister of the court was advising him constantly to ride on horseback when he had to appear in public, in Mossoi, At the Court, 5; on the kaiser's "almost naively displayed superiority" toward the tsar, see von Bülow, Memoirs, 2:146, 2:98.

32. On the authoritarian atmosphere at the tsar's own family, see Botkin, The Real Romanovs, 31-37; the tsar's authoritarian attitude toward his subordinates is epitomized by the following statement of his court chancellor, Alexander Mossoi: "the very idea of discussion, was wholly alien to the nature of Nicholas II." In Mossoi, At the Court, 10.

33. Nicholas did not have to impose his opinions, since his authority was too evident. He preferred to "evade arguments, seek alternative advice and go his own way." In Lieven, Nicholas II, 108.

34. Nicholas's ethnocentrism is seen in his stern attitudes toward minorities within his empire, such as Jews, Finns, and Armenians. See Judge, Plevna, 93-121; Shmuël Gutai, The Liberation Movement in Russia 1900-1905 (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 167.
35. For Nicholas’ polarized world-view, see Alexander Ular’s remark: “Everything is viewed through rose-coloured or black spectacles, according to his mental condition at the moment.” In Alexander Ular, Russia from Within (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1905), 38.

36. “He believed that he alone was responsible for the destiny of Russia,” wrote the pro-tsarist historian Sergei Oldenburg, “and that he would answer for this trust before the throne of the Almighty.” In Oldenburg, Last Tsar, 1:37.


38. Dillan, The Eclipse of Russia, 130.

39. Mossolev, At the Court, 10-11.

40. Schelkin, Recollections of a Russian Diplomat, 104, 106.


43. For Nicholas’ dedication to the Far East region, see Romanov, Russia in Manchuria, 52-53.

44. On Ukhтомsky’s ideological role, see Malozemoff, Russian Far Eastern Policy, 43-44.


46. On Ukhтомsky’s relationship with the tsar at the time of the war, see Sir Bernard Parce, My Russian Memoirs (London: J. Cape, 1931), 58.

47. Nishi, The Origins, 12.

48. In fact, among all of the Russian ministers, only Kropotkin had been to Japan, but for a shorter visit than that of the tsar, see note 120.

49. Lieven, Nicholas II, 28-29. A recent publication of Nicholas’ complete diary does not add new information regarding the prewar period; see Nicholas II, Dnevnik Imperatora Nikolaia II [The Diary of Emperor Nicholas II] (Moscow: Orbita, 1991).

50. “His was a character essentially vague and elusive,” summarized Izvolsky, “of nuances and half-tones, and is difficult to define in exact terms.” In Izvolsky, The Memoirs of Alexander Izvolsky, 278. This elusiveness may have contributed to the limited analysis of his personality, and despite of renewed interest in the last tsar recently, a comprehensive scholarly biography is still in need. For the limited direct sources on the tsar, see Raymond A. Estius, “Nicholas II and the Russo-Japanese War,” The Russian Review 40 (1981): 396-411; Theodore H. von Lane, Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia (New York at Henleum, 1969), 123.

51. See Vladimir I. Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1939), 257. In later years, Sir Bernard Parce referred to this account as "practically...the textbook of the government's expansion eastward." In Parce, My Russian Memoirs, 58.

52. Ukhтомsky, Travels in the East, 1:84.

53. Ukhтомsky, Travels in the East, 1:43, 52, 84, 127, 200, 233, 250. Even when Ukhтомsky attempted to depict Asians positively, he betrayed his Western prejudice. The Siamese king was “stately build” and “handsome,” he wrote explaining that he “has nothing remarkably Tarantine in his appearance, nothing of the Mongol or the Malay, but rather reminds one of a native of the south of Europe.” In the same vein, the Queen of Siam looked youthful even “though women in the tropics age rapidly.” In Ukhтомsky, Travels in the East, 2:211, 223.


56. In his diary, Nicholas mentioned frequently Alexander (“Sandra”), see Nicholas II, Dnevnik. The two met after the grand duke’s return to Russia and again during Nicholas’ own tour in Ceylon, see Nicholas II, Dnevnik, 40.

57. Interestingly, Ukhтомsky saw Nagasaki in a similar light. “Below us,” he wrote, “the toylight streets with the bed of a torrent running diagonally across them, swarm with cheerful and animated human beings,” in Ukhтомsky, Travels in the East, 2:425.

58. Pierre Loti, Madame Chrysanthème (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1893). I. Loti’s influence is seen in the literal trend he established, which played on the sexual charm of the Japanese woman, while at the same time ridiculing her as a childish and inferior creature. Loti had several French followers, the most notable among them was Poupée Japonaise. See Félicien Chopin, Poupée japonaise (Paris: Librairie Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1900). The most famous imitation, however, was the American Madame Butterfly, which inspired Puccini’s opera. See John Luther Long, Madame Butterfly (New York: L.R. Hamblesley & Co., 1898); Giacomo Puccini, L. Illica, & G. Giacosa, Madame Butterfly (New York: G. Ricordi & Co., 1905).

59. Loti, Madame Chrysanthème, 6, 26.

60. Ukhтомsky, Travels in the East, 2:447. “Orientalism itself,” writes Edward Said, “was an exclusively male province...This is especially evident in the writing of travelers and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and about all they are willing.”


63. Nicholas' early romance was characterized by the opposition of his parents. It was contended that one of the motives Tsar Alexander III had in sending Nicholas on his long voyage was to distance him from the dancer Mathilde Kschessinska, with whom the prince had an affair the tsar did not approve. The tsar also did not approve an earlier love affair Nicholas had started to develop with Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt, see Bing, *The Secret Letters*, 38; Mikhail Iorshnikov, Liudmila Protasov, and Yuri Shelavye, *The Sunset of the Romanov Dynasty* (Moscow: Terra, 1992), 122; Mossolov, *At the Court*, 43.

64. On Nicholas' rendezvous in Nagasaki, see Admiral G. Tsuyinsky, *50 Let v Imperatorskom Flote Fiytye Years in the Imperial Fleet* (Riga: Kn-vo "Oriental," 1923 c.).

65. For the tsar's devotion to his family, see Dillon, *The Eclipse of Russia*, 122-23; Mossolov, *At the Court*, 30-32.


67. Despite Nicholas' moralistic and antisensual mentality after his engagement in 1894, the previous five years of his life were characterized by a double standard toward sexuality, as can be seen in his *forbidden* affair with the dancer Kschessinska, see Robert K. Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 25-35. During his voyage, Nicholas met his cousin Alexander in Ceylon. "He envied my thrilling vacation," wrote Alexander, "He found no pleasure in traveling as he did... Nicholas was bitter. "My trip is senseless...palaces and generals are the same all the world over, and that's all I am permitted to see. I could just as well have stayed at home." In Alexander, *Once a Grand Duke*, 167. Although a recent French biography of Nicholas II stated that "according to the Japanese police reports, the Tsarevich and his companions spent their nights in the places 'where sailors usually go,' there is evidence for that exploit." See Marc Ferro, *Nicholas II: The Last of the Tsars* (London: Viking, 1991), 20.


70. Ukhtomsky, *Travels in the East*, 2:423. Interestingly, most of the Japanese Russians met in their own territories in the Far East were women. Among the 5,000 Japanese who lived there in 1901, the majority were women—daughters of impoverished fishermen or peasants—who had been sold as domestic servants or prostitutes. By 1901 "Rice ladies" could be found in every Primor district town. See John T. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 77-78.


73. Dilke, "English influence in Japan," 443.

74. Although writing on the European image of the Near East, Edward Said's cultural dichotomy seems to elucidate the basic function of the above narratives on Japan: "The Oriental is irrational, deprived (fallen), childlike, different; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, normal." In Said, *Orientalism*, 40. "Looking on these atavistic, plain-featured (from a European point of view), and monotonously typical races," Ukhtomsky observed in Nagasaki, "one begins to understand why tourists are generally charmed with the appearance of the little natives." In Ukhtomsky, *Travels in the East*, 2:423.


80. Lott, *Madame Chrysanthème*, 133, 63; for similar references, see Champsauf, *Poupée Japonaise*, 4, 61, 156.


82. On January 8, 1892, Nicholas recorded in his diary, "I received the Swedish minister and the Japanese monkey the charge d'affaires, who brought me a letter, a portrait and an ancient amulet from her Majesty [Empress Hanako]." In Nicholas II, *Das Tagebuch des Letzten Zaren von 1890 bis Zum Fall [The Diary of the Last Tsar from 1890 until His Fall]* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1923), 22 (this excerpt is not found in the Russian version). Also Witte mentioned in his memoir the tsar's reference to the Japanese as macaques (monkeys), in Witte, *Memoirs of Count Witte*, 189, the English tutor of the tsar's children, M. Eager, recalled five-year-old Princess Marie saying to him at the outbreak of the war: "Mamma told me the Japs were all little people." When he
explained that they were ordinary human beings, Olga, the eldest daughter, was surprised: "I did not know that the Japs were people like ourselves. I thought they were only like monkeys." In Eager, Six Years, 202.

83. The only precursor to the weak and feminine image of the Japanese was the onset of the yellow peril fears in Europe. It should be noted, however, that until the Russo-Japanese War, the fah of the East focused on the Chinese, see Richard Austin Thompson, The Yellow Peril, 1890-1924 (New York: Arno Press, 1978). Kaiser William II, the prime exponent of those fears, exerted certain influence on his cousin, the Tsarina Alexandra, yet her husband, Nicholas, did not seem to take the kaiser seriously, see Guiko, Features and Figures of the Past, 281; Von Bülow, Memoirs. 1:57, 505-506, 2:72-73, 98.


86. On the postcards, see R.M. Connaughton, The War of the Rising Sun (London: Routledge, 1988), 167-68, picture 1. Evidently, the simian reference was very common within the Russian army. General Kuropatkin, for example, often referred to the Japanese as "monkeys" in Kokovtsov, Out of My Past, 18, 20; the American correspondent Frederick McCormick, who visited Siberia just before the war, noted that "the Japanese as a people the highest officers of the government of the Eastern Empire and the people as a whole had but one opinion. The Japanese to them were "monkeys."" In Frederick McCormick, The Tragedy of Russia in Pacific Asia, 2 vols. (New York: The Outing Publishing Co., 1907), 2:232.


90. For the "Mikado" in Russia, see Maurice Baring, With the Russians in Manchuria (London: Methuen, 1905), 3.


92. On the other side of the ocean, the Japanese image prior to the war was not much different. "Most Americans still thought of Japan," recalled Lloyd Griscom, the American minister in Tokyo, "as a flowery fairyland inhabited by little people in kimono, carrying fans and parasols." In Lloyd C. Griscom, Diplomatically Speaking (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1940), 224.


95. In 1880, the French military attaché in Tokyo, Lieutenant Bouganville, reported to his government that the performance of the artillery officers and engineers he observed in a visit to ordnance facilities were unsatisfactory and, in fact, "childish." In Ernst Prentis, Before Aggression: Europeans Prepare the Japanese Army (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1965), 89-91.


98. Ibid., 1:431.

99. Ibid., 1:432.

100. Ibid., 1:433-34.


106. Diary excerpt from October 15, 1903, in Baelz, Awakening Japan, 192.

107. Esthus argues that the Japanese sensed the British conceived attitude and were thereby reluctant to share information with them, nor to seek a closer alliance, in Esthus, Double Eagle, 138.

108. Miller, Thrilling Stories, 288.


110. Kipling, From Sea to Sea, 1:376.


113. See an excerpt from a dispatch of d'Anethon to de Faverenc, No. 1/1, 30 January 1903, in Lensen, The d'Anethon Dispatches, 158.

114. McCormick, The Tragedy, 1:35. Regarding this attitude, McCormick noted the following: "Having campaigned with the Japanese I had never been able to understand the scrupulous disdain and contempt that not only the Russians, but also certain other Western peoples such as the French, expressed against—this oldest military nation in existence." Ibid., 35-36.


116. Diary excerpt from February 19, 1904, in Baelz, Awakening Japan, 251-52. During the war, some Russian POWs confessed that they were told by their officers that "the Japanese Army was brittle as a clay statue." In Tadayoshi Sakurai, Human Battles: A Soldier's Story of Port Arthur (Tokyo: Teibi Publishing Co., 1907), 187.


120. Kuropatkin, 1909, 1:216.

121. See MacDonald to Harding, 30 June 1904, Harding Papers 3, cited by Nish, The Origins, 209.

122. Two months before the war, the British minister in Peking Sir Ernest Satow commented on the link between the Sino-Japanese War and the military image of Japan: "As to Japan not being willing to fight about Manchuria, it must be remembered that many had said to them that their China campaign of 1894-95 was a mere military promenade, and that they would never get their position as a nation recognized until they crossed swords with a European power." An excerpt from Satow's diary, December 24, 1903, in George Alexander Lensen, ed., Korea and Manchuria between Russia and Japan, 1895-1904: The Observations of Sir Ernest Satow (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1966), 245.


124. The statement to the kaiser is cited by Dillon, The Eclipse of Russia, 118.

125. Nish, The Origins, 256.

126. The limited reliability of the Russian reports can be seen in the vast differences between the assessment of total size of the Japanese army, made by the Russian military and the naval attacks in Tokyo, in Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past, 280.


130. See Harding to Foreign Secretary Lansdowne, 13 December 1904, Harding Papers 46, in Nish, The Origins, 218.


134. For Alexiev's warnings, see F. L. Burtsev, Tsar i Vneshniaia Politika [The Tsar and the Foreign Policy] (Berlin, 1910), 61-63. Alexiev's response is cited by McCormick, The Tragedy, 1:68.


136. For Plehve's remark, see D. N. Liubimov, Russkoe Souto Nachala Devetiatych Godov, 1902-1906 (manuscript in archives of the Hoover Library on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, Calif., n.d.), 141-42; see also Judge, Plehve, 171-72.

137. See Kokovtsov, Out of My Past, 18.


141. The Times (London), 11 February 1904.


145. Tretyakov, My Experience at Nan Shan, 286.


148. Esthus, Double Eagle, 6. The tsar's unflinching confidence at the beginning of the war is also reflected in a remark made by his friend, Prince Uktomsky: "It is almost
beneath our dignity to be fighting the Japanese. This war in itself is nothing. Of course, we shall dictate peace in Tokyo.” In Pares, My Russian Memoirs, 58.


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