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Title	A New Russo-Japanese Alliance?--Diplomacy in the Far East during World War I
Author(s)	BERTON, Peter
Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 11, 57-78
Issue Date	1993
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/8054
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	KJ00000034011.pdf



A New Russo-Japanese Alliance?: Diplomacy in the Far East During World War I

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I. Introduction: A New Russo-Japanese Alliance?

At the end of February 1992, Russian President Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin sent a personal letter to the Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi, the first personal message to a Japanese leader from a Russian president. The letter was an extremely friendly document in which Yeltsin said that he considered Japan to be Russia's partner and *potential ally*, one that shares with Russia the same human values (emphasis added).¹ It should be noted, however, that Yeltsin did not single out Japan as the only potential ally; on his trips to England, Canada, and the United States he kept stressing that Russia was not a potential enemy of the Western countries and that it would like to become an ally and more than just a partner. In his response, Miyazawa did not directly pick up the notions of partner and potential ally, but he reiterated his hope that upon the settlement of the territorial problem and the conclusion of a peace treaty he would like to build a "New Age in Japan-Russia Relations."²

Is a "New Age" on the horizon in Russo-Japanese relations? Or perhaps even a new "Russo-Japanese Alliance"? These questions would have been considered 'off the wall' only a few short years ago. And yet today, in the atmosphere of post-Cold War international politics,³ it is not inappropriate to discuss them. A pertinent question would be, what is there in the historical record of relations between the two neighbors – Japan and Russia – that would now be relevant to this discussion.

It is common knowledge that Japan and Russia had been traditional enemies. They had a long adversarial relationship that culminated in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/1905. The relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union became more antagonistic, as traditional power politics rivalries were reinforced by ideological conflicts, and, eventually, also led to hostilities in the final days of the Pacific War. What is not generally known in both Japan and Russia, is that there were periods in history when the two countries cooperated, concluded mutually beneficial agreements (albeit at the expense of third countries, such as China), including a treaty of alliance in 1916.⁴ That such an event could have taken place only a decade or so after the two powers fought a war is all the more remarkable.

This article will describe the evolution of Russo-Japanese relations from the Portsmouth Peace Conference through several public and secret agreements between the two countries, culminating in the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese Treaty of Alliance in July 1916. Unfortunately, this remarkable event took place only a few months before the outbreak of the first

of two revolutions in Russia, and thus did not contribute to further development of relations between the two neighboring powers. The article will seek to analyze the motives of the decisionmakers in both countries, as they moved from war to peace, to rapprochement, to entente, and, finally, to alliance. This analysis should serve as a reminder to both the Japanese and the Russians that at the present time they can also move from war to hostility to tolerance and beyond.

II. Background:

Russo-Japanese Relations After the Treaty of Portsmouth, 1907-1912

The treaty of Portsmouth of 1905, which brought the Russo-Japanese War to an end, was the first step toward the establishment of a new balance of power in East Asia. After the disastrous war, Russia's concern was to minimize the danger of internal revolution. As its foreign policy turned westward to Europe, it needed some guarantees of the stability of its Far Eastern possessions. In Japan, the military leaders, fearful of a war of revenge on Russia's part, felt the need to come to an understanding with their traditional enemy. The rapprochement between Russia and Japan was also promoted by their respective allies – France and Great Britain – who were anxious to align the two countries against Germany, and to make it possible for Russia to concentrate its forces in Europe.

In July 1907, Russia and Japan signed a treaty of commerce and navigation, a fisheries convention, and two political agreements, only one of which was made public. The secret agreement (communicated only to Russia's and Japan's allies, France and Great Britain, respectively) divided Manchuria into two spheres of influence, leaving the larger, northern part to Russia, and the southern part of Manchuria to Japan. In addition, Russia undertook not to interfere with further development of "relations of political solidarity" between Japan and Korea (in other words, Russia looked the other way as Japan proceeded to annex Korea), while Japan recognized Russia's "special interests" in Outer Mongolia.⁵ Thus, in the secret agreement, Korea, Manchuria, and Mongolia were set aside for Russian or Japanese activity.

Two years later, in response to an American plan for the neutralization of railroads in Manchuria (a scheme obviously inimical to Russian and Japanese interests), the two countries proceeded to work more closely together. In July 1910, Russia and Japan again concluded two conventions, and again only one of them was made public. The public convention put all powers on notice that Russia and Japan were prepared to maintain and defend the status quo in Manchuria – their special interests – with all measures at their disposal. In the secret agreement, the two powers pledged cooperation in the consolidation and further development of their respective spheres of influence in Manchuria, and in the event of a threat to these interests, they pledged themselves to take common action or to support each other's defense of these

interests.⁶ The conclusion of these treaties was promptly followed by the Japanese annexation of Korea.

When Mongolia (commonly known as Outer Mongolia) declared its independence from China following the Chinese revolution and the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, Russia saw an opportunity to develop further its interests there. Since the Japanese had extensive interests in adjoining Inner Mongolia, Russia and Japan undertook to conclude yet another agreement (to be kept secret from all powers except France and Great Britain) that clearly demarcated their respective spheres of influence in Inner Mongolia.⁷ Following this understanding with Japan, Russia recognized the new regime in Outer Mongolia in November 1912.

Thus, during the course of only five years, a substantial part of northeast Asia had been divided between Russia and Japan; Korea had been annexed, Outer Mongolia, for all intents and purposes, detached from China, and Manchuria and Mongolia (Outer as well as Inner) divided into Russian and Japanese spheres of influence. After 1912, relations between Russia and Japan were very different from those in the aftermath of the Portsmouth treaty in 1905. Both countries realized that by cooperating they could successfully expand and develop their respective spheres of influence in (and at the expense of) China, as well as resist moves by third countries (in this instance, the United States) that aimed at curtailing their interests in the region.

III. Japan's Response to the Outbreak of World War I, 1914

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 had immediate repercussions in East Asia and resulted in a gradual strengthening of Japan's international position. France and Russia almost immediately broached the idea of a Franco-Japanese and a Russo-Japanese Alliance.

Russia's motives in proposing an alliance were twofold. On the one hand, it was to induce Japan to enter the war on the side of the Allies, thereby strengthening the Allied camp. On the other hand, it was to relieve Russia's anxiety over the security of its Far Eastern areas and allow greater concentration of its forces in Europe. This main consideration, perhaps coupled with a desire to cement relations with Great Britain (which would have been strengthened had Russia joined the Anglo-Japanese alliance), persisted even after Japan's entry into the war.⁸

A discussion of Japanese reaction to these proposals is somewhat complex because of the Elder Statesmen who indirectly wielded considerable power and were determined to influence the main directions of Japanese foreign policy. Being old men with considerable bitter experience with the Imperialist Powers at a time when Japan was weak and at their mercy, they favored alliances with Russia, and perhaps with France, to serve as guarantees over and above the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Above all, they feared the possible isolation of a Japan that had to confront the horrifying

spectre of an alliance of the “white race against the yellow peoples”⁹ (see below). We may reason that the war in Europe was hardly a sign of white solidarity, but prejudice based on long and frustrating experiences dies slowly. One such humiliation was the Triple Intervention in 1895, when Germany, France, and Russia forced Japan to give up a foothold in Manchuria.

Prime Minister Okuma Shigenobu was against Russia’s immediate adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, believing that this matter would be better postponed until after the war. Some Japanese diplomats, notably the Ambassador to Russia, Baron Motono Ichiro, were in favor of closer relations with the Allies, *but* primarily for the sake of securing for Japan a stronger voice at the peace conference. Ambassador to France, Baron Ishii Kikujiro (who became Foreign Minister in 1915) was ambivalent. He preferred to follow London’s lead in this matter. The Japanese Foreign Minister in 1914 was Baron Kato Takaaki, who had served as Ambassador to the Court of St. James. He considered the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to be the axis of Japan’s foreign policy, and hesitated to allow Russia to join what had been, originally, an anti-Russian alliance. Since the British did not view the Russian and French proposals with enthusiasm, Kato decided to reject them, under the pretext that such negotiations should be handled after the end of the war, and he obtained the concurrence of the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey.¹⁰

In November 1914, Japanese troops captured the German stronghold of Tsingtao in Northern China. The British Government once more requested that Japanese troops be dispatched to Europe, hinting that Japan would get more weight at the peace conference. They were again unsuccessful. In January 1915, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, believing that Grey no longer opposed new alliances with Japan, decided that the time was ripe to form an Anglo-Russo-Franco-Japanese quadruple alliance. He argued that relations between Russia and Great Britain were based only on wartime agreements, and that the proposed quadruple alliance would continue after the war.

Kato’s reaction to the new Allied proposals was entirely negative. In the absence of specific new proposals by Grey, he failed to see the need to reconsider Japan’s position, or even to make inquiries in London. At the same time, the Japanese Foreign Minister asked the Foreign Secretary to obtain confirmation from both France and Russia that, by virtue of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan was in the same position as Britain with regard to the conduct of war and the joint conclusion of peace. After confirmations were received from both governments, Kato was satisfied that Japan’s position was fully safeguarded without new alliances, which, he felt, were not to Japan’s advantage.¹¹

After the end of German resistance in China, and with all powers with interests in the Far East (except the United States) engaged in fighting each other, the Japanese leaders concluded that the time was ripe to exact

concessions from the Chinese Government and to enlarge Japan's interests in China. By this time, China was Japan's second most important trading partner and accounted for 80 percent of total Japanese overseas investments.

In January 1915, Japan submitted five groups of demands in twenty-one articles to China. The first four groups were aimed to establish for Japan a dominant economic position in China, especially in the just-occupied German concessions in North China as well as in southern Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia. The demands in the fifth group would have practically cost China its sovereignty. They were termed "wishes" and were later dropped. Negotiations with China went on for several months, and, in the end, Japan had to resort to an ultimatum to force China to accept the first four groups. Treaties embodying most of the Japanese demands were signed in May 1915. Significantly, Japan was recognized by China as the successor to Germany's rights and interests. After the negotiations had begun, Japan first communicated only four groups of demands to Great Britain, and later, in lesser detail, to Russia, France, and the United States.¹²

The Russian diplomat in charge of the Far Eastern Department, Grigorii Kozakov, opined that though Japan's action was arbitrary and the three powers were not consulted, it was not unexpected. Japan had to be repaid for its participation in the war.¹³ In a report to Prime Minister Ivan Goremykin, Sazonov argued that for many years, perhaps decades, Russia must concentrate its attention and forces in the West. Therefore, it must seek peace and friendship with its neighbors in the Far East, and especially with the strongest of them, Japan. A demarcation of interests in China appeared quite feasible, and cooperation with Japan was desirable. If Japan wanted closer relations, Russia should cooperate, though not to the extent of an offensive-defensive alliance.¹⁴

By May 1915, the Germans broke through Russian lines, and the Russian Army lost over one hundred thousand prisoners in a single battle. The Russian Army was seriously short of ammunition and Japanese supplies were becoming of greater and greater importance. Russia could not take any action which would jeopardize this supply line. Shortly afterwards, Sazonov again tried to raise the issue of a triple or quadruple alliance, but got nowhere with either Grey or Kato. As a fallback position, Sazonov thought that, at the very least, Japan should formally adhere to the London Declaration signed by England, France, and Russia on September 5, 1914. According to this Declaration, the three governments engaged "not to conclude peace separately during the present war." At the time of the initial signing, Russian efforts to have Japan join the London Declaration were thwarted by both Grey and Kato, who argued that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance made Japan's adherence unnecessary. But Sazonov was getting more and more worried about future relations with Japan; unless drawn closer to the Allies, Japan could, after the war, be completely oriented toward Germany.

Sazonov's next move was to point out to Grey that there were serious motives to accelerate, if possible, Japan's adherence. He had reason to believe

that it would facilitate obtaining munitions in Japan, as it would be difficult for the Japanese to refuse their allies a substantial part of their own rifles and cannons. These arguments convinced Grey that it was inappropriate to resist further persistent Russian demands, and he agreed that, after all, Japan should adhere to the London Declaration.

In Japan, changes had taken place in the Cabinet. Kato was finally ousted by the Elder Statesmen at the beginning of August 1915, and Ishii, the Japanese Ambassador to France, was selected to succeed him as Foreign Minister. Having observed the European situation, Ishii felt that Japan had everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by adhering to the London Declaration. He was very much alarmed by the military situation in Russia and feared that Russia might make peace, or even conclude an alliance, with Germany. Japan's adherence, he felt, might have a restraining effect and, more importantly, it would give Japan an equal voice at the peace conference.

Prime Minister Okuma yielded to the advice of almost all Japanese ambassadors in Europe and agreed to commit Japan to the London Declaration. On October 19, 1915, Japan adhered formally, first making sure that this would not add new responsibilities, such as sending Japanese troops to Europe.¹⁵ The Russian shortage of munitions was so acute, that attempts were made to assure a supply even from Chinese arsenals. In November 1915, Sazonov persuaded Britain and France to submit a joint note to Japan proposing that China break relations with Germany and place a number of its arsenals at the disposal of the Allies.

While most Japanese diplomats stationed abroad generally supported the proposal of the Allies, the Japanese military were strongly opposed. They argued that it was a pretext to extend Allied influence in China to the detriment of Japan. The Gaimusho was likewise against China's entry into the war, fearing that it would secure a voice for China at the peace conference. In a politely worded memorandum, while promising to cooperate with the Allies in the matter of arsenals and the suppression of German intrigues, Japan rejected the Allied request that China break off relations with Germany.¹⁶

IV. The Views of Elder Statesman Field Marshal Yamagata, 1915

Sazonov's efforts to conclude an alliance with Japan again prompted the Elder Statesmen to action. After the unsuccessful attempt in September 1914, the Elder Statesmen were silently biding their time. The occasion presented itself in January, when Kato again rejected the Allied proposals. In February, Prince Yamagata drafted a long memorandum giving detailed reasons why Japan should conclude an alliance with Russia and why this should be done without delay.¹⁷

This confidential memorandum offers a revealing picture of Yamagata's attitudes and reasoning, and a glimpse into the logic, or lack of it, in his

thinking. First, there are some thoughts on the war situation in Europe and postwar peace.

As the belligerents [themselves] do not know how long the war would last, nor how it would develop, bystanders naturally cannot foresee its outcome. Difficult as it is for Russia, Britain, France, and Belgium to defeat Germany and Austria, so that they could not rise again, it is likewise difficult for Germany and Austria to win a decisive victory over Russia, Britain, and France. After all, it might not be too great a mistake to predict that the war would end in a 50-50 or 60-40 settlement. Whatever the result might be, however, this war will disrupt the balance of power and it would need readjustment. . . . After the restoration of peace, Europe would not only try to regain and accumulate national power by building military establishments, but would compete in accumulating wealth by means of developing commerce and industry.

Second, Yamagata foresees the continued involvement of the European powers in Asia, and especially in China:

The first area for this struggle is likely to be Eastern Asia – China in particular. . . . Nothing is more suitable than China, which is wealthy and populous and which has no one in the neighborhood with the tradition and power comparable to that of the United States in South America.

Perhaps the most revealing is Yamagata's fear of postwar struggle between the white and yellow races and Japan's potential isolation:

What is especially worth considering is the general tendency toward racial struggle in the world. It is undeniable that though the immediate cause of the present European war was the struggle for power, the real cause was the struggle between the Slavic and Germanic races. Seeing this, it could easily be imagined how much fiercer the struggle between yellow and white races would be. It is clear that the whites would unite in the event of a struggle between the yellow and white races. The Japanese should also consider that there are very few among the yellow peoples who are able to oppose successfully the white countries. It is indeed regrettable that the Japanese Empire was unable to safeguard the continent of China by its own power alone.

If Eastern Asia, and especially China, were to be left open for invasion, then no arguments would be necessary. But if the integrity and development of China was desired, so that the basis of Japan's prosperity could be strengthened, it is necessary to make China trust Japan, and for Japan to ally itself with one European power. This would prevent an unfavorable situation for Japan from arising in the struggle of the powers

in China. It is extremely important, therefore, to make plans to prevent the establishment of a white alliance against the yellow people.

His solution for the prevention of a “white alliance against the yellow people” was to develop additional alliances with some of the white powers:

The Anglo-Japanese alliance is, of course, serving this purpose. Though it might seem that there is no need to form another alliance so long as this one is maintained, the European war will change the balance of power. Reliance upon the Anglo-Japanese alliance alone would probably not be a foolproof policy for maintaining perpetual peace in Eastern Asia. Therefore, is it not the urgent duty of Japan to conclude a Russo-Japanese alliance, side by side with the Anglo-Japanese alliance, so that the means to attain this purpose could be completed?

The object of his proposed alliance is thus Russia. Yamagata goes on to argue why Russia should also be interested in an alliance with Japan and why the present timing is so important:

Russia is throwing all its forces to the West and has no leisure to think of the East. Furthermore, the fact that Japan has been helping Russia caused the Russians to feel grateful to Japan, and the past feelings of resentment have now been forgotten. Was it not true that the Russian Foreign Minister had already expressed himself in such a manner to Ambassador Motono? In the words of the proverb, “Strike while the iron is hot!” In other words, this is the best time to conclude a Russo-Japanese alliance.

The conclusion of an alliance after the European peace settlement might not necessarily be difficult, but it went without saying that the conditions would not be as convenient and favorable for Japan as now. Furthermore, at this time Britain, too, would welcome a Russo-Japanese alliance.

The Elder Statesman goes on to spell out some of the conditions that should be incorporated into the projected alliance:

In case there were objections to the term “alliance,” the present agreement might be expanded to include the following items:

- (1) Agreement by Russia and Japan to come to each other’s assistance, both defensively and offensively, in case either one was attacked by a third power;
- (2) Guarantee of the territory of China;
- (3) Agreement by both powers to give prior notice and to consult each other in diplomatic, economic (especially railroad) and other important matters relating to China;

- (4) In regard to Mongolia and Manchuria, agreement by both powers to give prior notice and to consult each other in all important matters to be negotiated with China, and to mutually respect and protect the special interests of both powers in that area.

Deliberation upon these and other points and decisions should, however, be left to the diplomatic authorities. This statement merely sets forth the urgent need to conclude a Russo-Japanese alliance or of expanding the existing agreement. It is obvious that in carrying this out, Great Britain should be previously consulted and utmost care should be exercised in all procedural details.

In considering the problem of a Russo-Japanese alliance or the development of Russo-Japanese agreements, an alliance with France or the development of the Franco-Japanese convention is also worth considering. This problem, however, is not as urgent as the Russian one and should be left for later study.

The memorandum was forwarded to all the other Elder Statesmen: Inoue, Matsukata and Oyama. All three statesmen promptly signed the memorandum, and some in forwarding letters to Yamagata, voiced their complete agreement with his views and the necessity for expanding the Russo-Japanese agreements.

On February 21, 1915, having obtained all the counter-signatures, Yamagata forwarded the memorandum to Okuma. Three days later, he received a polite letter from the Prime Minister promising to call and discuss the problem in person, and to send the Foreign Minister with excerpts from diplomatic correspondence.

On the following day, forwarding Okuma's letter to Inoue, Yamagata expressed doubt as to whether action would be promptly taken. He was not mistaken; Japan was at the time already engaged in negotiations with China which took precedence over all other matters.

V. The Mission of Prince Georgii Mikhailovich to Tokyo December 1915-January 1916

About December 10, 1915, Tsar Nicholas II suddenly decided to send his uncle, Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich, to Japan. This decision had been prompted by a reported conversation between Lieutenant-General Nakajima Masatake, the Japanese representative at the Tsar's Headquarters and one of the Tsar's surgeons. General Nakajima had suggested that the visit of a Grand Duke would be favorably received by Japan, who might redouble its efforts to help Russia in the struggle against Germany. Upon being informed of this conversation, the Tsar immediately decided to send his uncle to Japan as his personal representative. General Alekseev, the Chief of Staff, had previously suggested to the Tsar that such a mission might be productive. The Grand Duke asked Nakajima to accompany him on the mission to Japan,

and the General immediately conveyed the decision to Ambassador Motono who reported it to Tokyo.

The announced aim of the mission was to congratulate the Japanese Emperor on his coronation and to express Russia's gratitude for the assistance rendered by Japan in delivering war supplies. At the same time, the Russians hoped that Japan would increase deliveries and the mission would help to improve relations with Japan.

Sazonov, however, was rather pessimistic about the possibility of obtaining a substantial increase in the delivery of war supplies. However, since the sending a mission to Japan was raised only a few days after the receipt of the unsatisfactory Japanese reply to the Russian, British and French proposal regarding Chinese participation in the war, he felt that the occasion provided an opportunity to approach the Japanese again.

Sazonov decided to send along the Chief of the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Ministry, Grigorii Kozakov, who had formerly held posts in China and Japan. Sazonov's instructions to Kozakov were to convey his views about Russo-Japanese relations and the necessity for common action to prevent the strengthening of Germany's position in China, and to listen to the Japanese statesmen.¹⁸

During this period, Russia's financial situation was rather unfavorable. As a result, the Russian Government also decided to offer to Japan, in exchange for munitions, a sector of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria, between Changchun and the Sungari River, situated within the Japanese sphere of influence.

When informed of the Grand Duke's mission, Yamagata decided that this opportunity should be used to bring the two countries closer together. He arranged the appointment of General Terauchi, the Governor-General of Korea, to the welcoming committee. Count Terauchi was not only one of the most influential persons among the military, and a protege of the powerful Yamagata, but he was to become Prime Minister in less than a year. Equally significant was the fact that Terauchi was the President of the Japan-Russia Association.¹⁹

The Grand Duke and his suite left Moscow on December 28 and arrived in Tokyo on January 12, 1916. He made a point of visiting Yamagata on the day following his arrival in Tokyo, his first visit following an audience at the Palace. Accompanied by Kozakov, Minister Adachi, and others, the Grand Duke presented the Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky with diamonds to the old Field Marshal, and expressed to him the thanks of the Russian Emperor for his efforts in promoting friendly relations between the two countries. The Grand Duke also mentioned the shortage of munitions in Russia and asked for Yamagata's help. He was reassured by the Field Marshal that he would use his influence with the authorities.

In the meantime, Kozakov was also active in the prosecution of the mission entrusted to him by Sazonov. He spoke to Adachi and Terauchi (both of whom he had known during his earlier stay in Japan). He described in some detail

the various prewar German intrigues in trying to alienate Russia from Japan. He also reviewed previous Russian attempts to conclude a Russo-Japanese agreement, and deplored that the former Foreign Minister, Kato, had insisted on the maintenance of the status quo until the end of hostilities. Kozakov emphasized Russia's disappointment that Japan had rejected the British-French-Russian note regarding China's participation in the war. He also mentioned that, in return for an adequate quantity of munitions and war supplies, Russia was prepared to cede to Japan a part of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria.

Terauchi readily agreed that another Russo-Japanese agreement would reinforce the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, but insisted that, although it was imperative to restrain German activity in China, it was impossible to allow China's participation in the war as this would only lead to "greater arrogance" on the part of the Chinese. He promised to support the Russian proposals energetically in the Cabinet and among the Elder Statesmen.²⁰

Kozakov also submitted a written memorandum which outlined Russia's immediate military needs. It was a long list, including cannons, machine guns, 50 million rounds of ammunition, and other war materials. Of all these requests, the Japanese Government agreed, during the stay of the Grand Duke in Tokyo, to supply only 20 million rounds of ammunition.

The first meeting between Kozakov and Foreign Minister Ishii took place on January 14. Kozakov essentially repeated the arguments he had made to Adachi and Terauchi regarding the German intrigues and the menace that Germany presented to the Allies, including Japan. He summarized his superior's message as follows: Russo-Japanese collaboration would result in a common policy toward China; and, as an expression of this policy, Japan would supply Russia with munitions, while Russia would offer repayment by ceding the railroad sector.

On January 20, after a farewell reception for the Russian mission at the Imperial Palace, Ishii met with Kozakov to respond to Sazonov's message. To begin with, Ishii doubted whether after three agreements there was any need for yet another agreement with Russia. He agreed with Sazonov that Japan and Russia could not tolerate China falling into German hands, but that in itself was not a sufficient reason for negotiating a new agreement. As for the Allies' insistence on China's participation in the war, Ishii reiterated Japan's reasons for being against "the drawing of four hundred million Chinese into the war."²¹

Thus, Ishii rejected Russia's initiative. Yamagata was greatly astonished and upset when he was informed of the Foreign Minister's response to Kozakov and asked Terauchi, who was fluent in French, to tell the Russians that Japan's true intentions were not to be judged by the cold attitude shown by Ishii. Terauchi assured Kozakov in Seoul, where the Russian Mission stayed overnight prior to continuing their journey home, that a conference of the Elder Statesmen had taken place in the Palace. At that conference, the Russian views had been approved. He further indicated that no change of

Cabinets would prevent Japanese policy from proceeding along this favorable way.²²

A full-fledged conflict over the Russian issue did develop between the Elder Statesmen, particularly Yamagata, and the Okuma Cabinet, notably Foreign Minister Ishii. The Elder Statesmen prevailed, just as they had succeeded in ousting Foreign Minister Kato half a year earlier.²³ On February 14, 1916, the Japanese Cabinet, at an extraordinary meeting, adopted a new policy toward Russia calling for a strong defensive-offensive alliance. The War Ministry also made the decision to deliver immediately, out of existing stocks, 120,000 rifles and 60 million rounds of ammunition, on condition that Russia cede to Japan the entire railroad branch line from Changchun to Harbin.²⁴

Thus, the mission of the Grand Duke, although originally conceived by the Tsar as non-political and primarily for the purpose of expediting shipments of badly-needed war supplies to Russia, was used by Sazonov to attempt to obtain stronger Japanese collaboration in the struggle against Germany. The Mission failed in its primary objective, but it paved the way for a new Russo-Japanese agreement. The Japanese Elder Statesmen, especially Yamagata, took advantage of the arrival of the Mission and succeeded in altering the policy of the Foreign Ministry in favor of a strong offensive-defensive alliance with Russia.

VI. Negotiations in Petrograd and the Conclusion of the Russo-Japanese Alliance, July 1916

The Japanese Cabinet decision was reworded into a diplomatic draft of an agreement with Russia and forwarded to Ambassador Motono to serve as the opening position in the forthcoming negotiations with the Russian Foreign Minister. Ishii wanted, however, to obtain Russian concessions on several pending matters, i.e., the increase in Russian tariffs and revision of fishing regulations.²⁵ The Russian reply was conciliatory and promised some action with regard to the tariffs and fishing. But in the political realm, Sazonov reopened the question of China's entry into the War. He made the following points:

- (2) Together with Japan, Russia wished to prevent the establishment of German influence in China after the war. To that end, China would have to sever diplomatic relations with Germany and join the Allies.
- (3) In concluding a treaty of alliance with Japan, Russia hoped to receive more active support in its prosecution of war against Germany. Japan could supply Russia with the amount of weapons and ammunition that Japan would have spent if it were really fighting the common enemy. In return, the Russian Government would cede to Japan, for a reasonable price, the railroad sector in the Japanese sphere of influence between Changchun and the Sungari River.

Ishii could not hide his disappointment that the Russian reply was quite different from what he had anticipated. He instructed Motono to most forcefully repeat previous Japanese objections against China's participation in the war, and to point out that supplying munitions to Russia was only an act of friendship and could not be treated as Japan's duty under a treaty of alliance.

Motono met Sazonov again on March 6, 1916, and conveyed Ishii's objections, privately warning the Foreign Minister that if Russia insisted on China's participation in the war as a prerequisite to negotiating the alliance treaty, it might be an obstacle to its conclusion. Sazonov withdrew his proposal, although he stressed again the need to stamp out German economic influence in China. Sazonov also assured Motono that Russia had no intention of imposing new responsibilities on Japan in the supply of munitions, and would be satisfied with whatever Japan could spare. Having warded off the Russian attempt to tie the question of China's participation in the war to the treaty negotiations, Motono presented the initial Japanese draft, on March 13, as a basis for negotiations.

The draft of the public convention consisted only of two articles. In the first article, the two countries, desiring to protect their territorial rights and special interests in the Far East, undertook to render each other friendly support and cooperation with all pacific means at their disposal. In the second article, they agreed not to be a party to any combination of powers having aggressive aims toward the other.

The secret convention was longer. In the most important articles, the two parties recognized that their vital interests would be menaced should China fall under the political domination of any third power that had aggressive intentions toward them. Russia and Japan agreed to communicate frankly and to discuss the measures to be taken to prevent such a situation from developing. If, as a consequence of measures taken by mutual consent, war were to be declared between one of them and a third power, they would undertake, upon demand, to render assistance to each other. Moreover, if war were declared, peace was not to be concluded except by mutual agreement. The duration of the treaty was left open.

The Japanese draft of the alliance was essentially an unlimited offensive-defensive pact that did not take into consideration the system of already existing agreements. Quite conceivably, such an agreement could have clashed with obligations under the Anglo-Japanese or the Russo-French pacts.

Sazonov's reaction was that the Japanese draft was probably acceptable, but needed careful study. However, he so decisively asserted that Russia could not cede the Harbin-Sungari sector of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which lay in the Russian sphere of influence, that Motono urged his Government to reconsider. In the meantime, on March 7, the Okuma Cabinet reached an important decision on its China policy, with the first objective being the achievement of a *predominant* position in China (emphasis added).

Fortunately for the Russians, this document, on being transmitted by the Gaimusho to its Ambassador in Petrograd, was intercepted and decoded in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The intercepted Japanese document must have influenced Sazonov to attempt to include a clause restricting Japanese action in China.

The Russian reply to the Japanese drafts of the public and secret agreements was presented to Motono on March 21. Sazonov rejected the Japanese idea of a strong independent alliance, and offered a weak substitute in the form of an agreement in which the most vital obligation to render military assistance was made contingent upon receiving military assistance from other powers. Russia at this time was genuinely interested in collaborating with Britain and France in order to acquire Constantinople and the Straits, and wanted a Russo-Japanese alliance within the framework of the Entente relationships. Sazonov wanted the agreement with Japan to run parallel to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, so that, perhaps, the two pacts could be later combined into a triple alliance. He did not want to be bound to Japan in a war against the United States.

The next important proposal was that Russia and Japan inform each other of all international agreements concerning their special interests in China, which they might want to enter into, and not to conclude, *without prior consent of the other party*, agreements relating to "interior China" (emphasis added). Allegedly, to allay China's suspicions, and those of the European powers and the United States, the Russians proposed to include in the preamble to the public convention a statement to the effect that China's independence must be respected and that no power must seek there preponderant political influence. In view of Japan's obvious efforts to establish preponderant political influence in China during the previous year, these restrictive clauses constituted another attempt to bind Japan.

The Russian counter-draft also sought to eliminate the phrase "by all pacific means at their disposal" from the Japanese public agreement that called for the "protection of territorial rights and special interests *by all pacific means at their disposal*." At the time when the Russians advocated dropping the reference to "pacific means" in the public agreement, they proposed to incorporate it into the secret agreement, thus further emasculating the Japanese draft. A final suggestion was to reiterate in the secret agreement that all the secret treaties between Russia and Japan would continue to be in force.

What was the reaction of the Japanese to the Russian counter-proposal? It took almost a month for the Gaimusho to prepare a revised draft and get the necessary approval from Prime Minister Okuma and the Elder Statesmen. In their revised draft, the Japanese accepted the principle of making the commitment of military assistance contingent upon receiving help from Britain and France; requested the deletion of the preamble reaffirming the independence of China; and, naturally, vigorously objected to the inclusion of

Article V, requiring prior approval of new agreements with other countries relating to China.

The revised Japanese draft was cabled to Ambassador Motono in Petrograd on April 18 and the latter had several meetings with Sazonov. Unanimity was achieved on all points except for Article V, which called for preliminary consultation and for approval of treaties with third countries. It took several more meetings between the two diplomats, and cables to and from Tokyo, before Sazonov gave up and agreed to the elimination of Article V.

Neither country emerged victorious from the negotiations. Russia succeeded in weakening the alliance, by making the military commitment conditional upon receipt of assistance from France and Britain. On the other hand, Russia lost its battle to place limitations on the freedom of Japan's action in China.

In its final version, the public convention consisted of two articles. The first contained the pledge not to be a party to any arrangement or political combination directed against the other, and reflected the mutual suspicions held by both Russia and Japan relative to the possibility that either might conclude a separate peace with Germany. The second article was taken from their secret agreement of 1910, but extended to cover the entire Far East. It dealt with the defense of special interests of the two countries, and served as a notice to China, Germany, and the United States. The fact that a clause originally incorporated in a secret agreement between Russia and Japan now appeared in a public convention was indicative of the changing power relationship in the Far East.

The secret convention was a longer document. In the preamble, the two governments reaffirmed their three previous secret conventions. They recognized that their vital interests demanded that China should not fall under the political domination of any third power hostile to them, and undertook to discuss and agree upon measures to be taken to prevent such a situation from developing. In the event that, in consequence of measures taken by mutual agreement, war should be declared between one of the parties and a third power, the other party would, upon demand, come to its aid, and in that case peace would not be made without mutual agreement. An important provision was that neither party was bound to lend armed assistance unless it had assured itself of cooperation corresponding to the gravity of the conflict, on the part of its respective allies. The convention was to remain strictly confidential and valid until July 14, 1921, the expiration date of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

Since the other parallel negotiations between Japan and Russia regarding the sale of munitions, navigation rights on the Sungari River, and the cession of the railroad sector progressed, the Gaimusho saw no reason to delay the signing of the new Russo-Japanese agreement. With the approval of the Cabinet on June 18 and the proforma approval of the Emperor and the Privy Council, it only remained to inform and obtain the understanding of Japan's

and Russia's allies. The texts of both the public and secret agreements, as well as the railroad and the Sungari navigation matters, were communicated by the Russian and Japanese Ambassadors in London and Paris, to the British Foreign Secretary and the French Foreign Minister, who both voiced their approval.

The signing took place on July 3 at Petrograd with Sazonov and Motono affixing their signatures. The public agreement was announced simultaneously in Tokyo and Petrograd on July 7, 1916. When the public agreement with Russia was announced in Japan, there was popular jubilation and lantern processions. Prime Minister Okuma, Foreign Minister Ishii, Ambassador Motono, and even former Foreign Minister Kato were given higher ranks of nobility. Russia was busy fighting a war for its very existence, and the times hardly warranted any demonstration of public enthusiasm.

VII. The Aftermath and Conclusions

Shortly after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks began to publish the texts of all secret treaties concluded by the Tsarist Government. This included the 1916 secret treaty with Japan. The treaty was published under the sensational title "Secret Convention between Russia and Japan Having in View a Joint Armed Action Against America and England in the Far East Before the Year 1921."

This was patent falsehood and propaganda. The secret agreement was limited to China, and was designed to prevent China from falling under the domination of a third power. Both Russia and Japan had Germany in mind, and not the United States, when they negotiated the agreement.²⁶ The treaty reflected their mutual fear of Germany and the possibility that one of the partners might team up with a victorious Germany against the other. Furthermore, the provision to lend armed assistance was linked with receiving help from their respective allies, France and Great Britain. Considering the nature of British and French relations with the United States during this period, it is unlikely that the Alliance would have been applied against America within the then foreseeable postwar era. It must be noted, however, that as a sign of growing rapprochement between the two countries, the fact of another Russo-Japanese agreement indirectly strengthened the Japanese position vis-a-vis the United States.

During the course of negotiations, Russia and Japan kept their allies, France and Great Britain, briefed, and obtained their approval of both the public and secret conventions before they were signed. There was no intention on the part of either Japan or Russia to keep the 1916 agreements secret from Britain or France.

Had Russia stayed in the war until victory over Germany had been achieved, it is possible that Japan would have been more successful at the Versailles Peace Conference. It is not improbable, for example, that Russia

would have supported Japan in the fight for racial equality. Moreover, had friction developed between Russia and Britain over the division of spoils in the Near East, it is possible, especially in view of the decreasing popularity and effectiveness of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, that a Russo-Japanese bloc could have crystallized in the Far East to counter the developing Anglo-American coalition. Quite conceivably, the isolation of Japan at the Washington Conference in 1921/1922 and the return of Shantung rights to China could have been avoided. Russia and Japan could have further demarcated their spheres of influence in China, leaving essentially the western regions to Russia and the coastal part to Japan. As Sazonov indicated in 1915, when he spoke of long-range objectives of Russia and Japan, there was no basic clash of interests between the two countries.

What was the effect of the Russo-Japanese Alliance? Russia achieved additional assurance for the security of its Asian possessions and may have shifted some Siberian troops to the European front. Since the negotiations regarding the cession of the railroad sector progressed slowly, and were not completed until the October Revolution, it is doubtful whether the Alliance resulted in a substantial increase in the delivery of Japanese war supplies. Whether the alliance with Japan strengthened Russia's war capabilities is also difficult to answer in view of the effect of the February Revolution, which took place only a few months after the signing of the Alliance. It is likewise doubtful that the Alliance hastened China's break with Germany, which came about only after the intervention of the United States in the war. It must be conceded, however, that the conclusion of an alliance with Russia in 1916, accompanied by government-sponsored public demonstrations, helped to keep Japanese sympathies on the side of the Allies in the war, and made a separate peace with Germany a remoter possibility.

In Japan, the Elder Statesmen's objective of securing another European ally was achieved without sacrificing Japan's freedom of action in China. While Sazonov was in charge of foreign affairs in Russia, the Japanese Government was able to obtain confidential information about developments among the European Allies from him, including the secret agreements of Russia, Britain, and France. The events of 1917, however, eliminated Russia temporarily as a world power, and brought in a new government that repudiated Tsarist agreements and proceeded to conclude a separate peace with Germany.

The disappearance of Imperial Russia from the world stage made the 1916 agreement a scrap of paper and nullified the possibilities of practical application. Nonetheless this secret Russo-Japanese Alliance is significant in several ways.

First, as an example of successful interference by the Elder Statesmen in foreign affairs, it adds to the mounting evidence that the second Okuma Cabinet gradually surrendered to the wishes of the Elder Statesmen, and did not justify the public enthusiasm that accompanied its inauguration.

Moreover the Alliance offers valuable clues to the understanding of domestic power relationship in Japan during the period of World War I.

Second, evidence of intimate Russo-Japanese collaboration provides implications for other powers, especially China and the United States. The possibility of the two neighbors in Northeast Asia finding a mutually profitable formula for a common front, that would create a different power relationship in the Pacific, cannot be discounted. As a result of this period of rapprochement, and especially of the 1916 Alliance, all successive Chinese governments exercised a more cautious policy toward both Japan and Russia, in the latter case even after the change of regime. In the United States, by creating deep suspicions, the 1916 Alliance had a marked effect on Japanese-American relations, and especially upon American policy toward Japan.

Third, the 1916 Alliance reminds the two countries of this historical confluence of their national interests, and offers proof of the possibility and feasibility of close cooperation. It occurred following the culmination of a ten year period of rapprochement during the last years of Imperial Russia, and it was the highest point in Russo-Japanese relations, never surpassed before or after, yet achieved surprisingly so soon after the all-time low of the Russo-Japanese War. Even after the Russian Revolution, with accompanying repudiation of previous policies and the establishment of a government system opposed to that of Japan, there were factions in both Japan and the Soviet Union that advocated cooperation in order to counterbalance the growing weight of the United States in the Pacific. This was so dramatically demonstrated when the Soviet Union and Japan signed the Neutrality Pact in the spring of 1941.

In the three-quarter century period after 1916, Japan and Russia were engaged in two more wars. First, as an ally of Germany and Italy in World War II, Japan was attacked by the Soviet Union in the final days of the Pacific War. The hostilities lasted only a few weeks and Japan was the loser. Second, as an ally of the United States in the Cold War, Japan opposed Soviet aggression. The "peaceful" hostilities went on for over forty years and Japan was the victor. And so history repeats itself in the sense that Japan and the Russian Federation (formerly the Soviet Union) continued to engage in military and diplomatic combat. Will this unhappy era, just as the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/1905 lead to a new period of Japanese-Russian rapprochement? The international environment in Northeast Asia in the 1990s is, of course, drastically different from that of the 1900s and 1910s, and there is no weak China to gang up upon, and to carve up. There is also the presence of the United States – the only superpower in the world. Nonetheless, perhaps this study will serve as a reminder to both the Japanese and the Russians that, at the present time, they can again move from the hostility of the Cold War, to tolerance to cooperation and beyond.

Notes

*The author wishes to thank the Center for International Studies, School of International Relations, University of Southern California for its support and Elizabeth Knowlton, Assistant Director of the Center, for editorial assistance.

- 1 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, February 29 (1992), p. 1.
- 2 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 18 (1992).
- 3 For a highly-relevant discussion, see Peter Berton "Russia and Japan in the Post-Cold War Era," Chapter 3 in James C. Hsiung (ed.), *Asia-Pacific in the New World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, forthcoming in 1993).
- 4 Peter Berton, *The Secret Russo-Japanese Alliance of 1916* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1956), 438 pp.

See also Peter Berton, *Case Study in International Negotiations: The Russo-Japanese Alliance of 1916* (Pittsburgh: Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, Pew Program in Case Teaching and Writing in International Affairs, 1988), 101 pp.; and the accompanying *Teaching Notes: The Russo-Japanese Alliance of 1916*, 16 pp.

For a comprehensive study of Russo-Japanese relations from the War of 1904/1905 to 1917, see Yoshimura Michio, *Nihon to Roshia* [Japan and Russia], rev. and expanded ed. (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyoron Sha, 1991), 480 pp. See especially Chapter 4, "Dai-ichiji Taisen-chu ni okeru Nichi-Ro Kankei" [Japanese-Russian Relations During the First Great War], pp. 169-318.

While there is no comparable Russian study, Vsevolod Marinov covers Russo-Japanese relations from 1905 to 1914. V. A. Marinov, *Rossia i Iaponia pered pervoi mirovoi voinoi (1905-1914 gody): Ocherki istorii otnoshenii* [Russia and Japan Before the First World War (The Years 1905-1914): Essays on the History of the Relationship] (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), 150 pp.

- 5 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, *Manchuria - Treaties and Agreements* (Washington, 1921) (hereinafter cited as *Manchuria*), p. 116 ff.; John V. A. MacMurray (comp. and ed.), *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1894-1919* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1921), Vol. I; Ernest Batson Price, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia* (Baltimore, 1933), pp. 107-111.

Texts of all the secret treaties were checked with Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter cited as Gaimusho), Political Affairs Bureau, *Nichi-Ro Kosho Shi* [History of Negotiations Between Japan and Russia] (Tokyo, 1944) (hereinafter cited as *Nichi-Ro Kosho Shi*), 2 vols. Marked "Secret."

- 6 *Manchuria*, p. 141 ff.; Price, pp. 113-116.

- 7 Price, p. 119.
- 8 Gaimusho, Archives File Number Matsu 2. 1. 1. 30 *Oshu Senso Kankei Nichi-Ei-Ro-Futsu Shikoku no Domei ni Kansuru Iken Kokan Ikken* [Documents Relating to the European War – The Exchange of Opinions Concerning the Anglo-Franco-Russo-Japanese Four Power Alliance] (hereinafter cited as *Oshu Senso*);
Gaimusho, Research Department, *Sekai Taisen Kankei Nippon Gaiko Bunsho* [Japanese Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Great World War], marked “Secret” (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1939) (hereinafter cited as *Sekai Taisen Gaiko Bunsho*), Vol. I;
Gaimusho, Research Department, *Daiichiji Sekai Taisen Kankei - Rokoku* [Documents Relating to the First World War – Russia], marked “Secret” (hereinafter cited as *Rokoku - Sekai Taisen*), Part I;
Gaimusho, Archives File Number Matsu 1. 1. 1. 2 *Gaimu Daijin no Kaidan Yoryo Zassan - Kato Daijin no Bu* [Summaries of Conversations with Foreign Ministers – File of Minister Kato];
See also a description of Franco-Japanese negotiations in Part XIV, Chapter II, entitled “Alliance Proposals from France and Russia” in Ito Masanori, *Kato Komei* [Komei Kato] (Tokyo: Kato Haku Denki Hensan Inkaï, 1929), Vol. II, pp. 105-106.
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Central Executive Committee, Commission for the Publication of Documents of the Era of Imperialism, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v epokhu imperializma - Dokumenty iz arkhivov tsarskogo i vremennogo pravitel'stv, 1878-1917 gg.* [International Relations of the Era of Imperialism – Documents from the Archives of the Tsarist and Provisional Governments] (Moscow, 1931-1938) (hereinafter cited as *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*), Series III, Volumes II and VI, Part I.
- 9 Tokutomi Ichiro (comp.), *Koshaku Yamagata Aritomo Den* [Biography of Prince Yamagata Aritomo] (Tokyo: Yamagata Aritomo Ko Kinen Jigyokai, 1934) (hereinafter cited as *Yamagata Aritomo Den*).
See also the biographies of the other Elder Statesmen: Prince Matsukata Masayoshi, Field Marshal Oyama Iwao, and Marquis Inoue Kaoru, as well as of Prime Minister Okuma.
- 10 Great Britain, Foreign Office, *British Documents on the Origin of the War 1898-1914*, edited by G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1932), Vols. X and XI.
Gaimusho, Research Department, *Nichi-Ei Gaiko Shi* [History of Diplomatic Relations Between Japan and Great Britain], marked “Confidential” (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1938), Vol. II, Chapter XIII, entitled “The Problems of Participation and Cooperation in the Great World War,” pp. 289-361.
- 11 See Note 8.
- 12 Gaimusho, Archives File Number Matsu 2. 1. 1. 32 *Taisho Yonen Nisshi Kosho Ikken - Taisho Yonen Nisshi Kosho Temmatsu Gaiyo* [Documents

Relating to Sino-Japanese Negotiations in 1915 – Summary of the Sino-Japanese Negotiations in 1915].

- 13 *Rokoku - Sekai Taisen*.
- 14 *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Series III, Vol. VII, Part I.
- 15 *Ibid.*, Series III, Vol. VIII, Parts I and II; *Sekai Taisen Gaiko Bunsho*, Vol. I;
 Gaimusho, Archives File Number MT 2. 3. 7. 1 *Ei-Futso-Ro Sankoku no Tandoku Fu-Kowa Sengen ni Nichi-I Kamei Ikken* [Documents Relating to the Adherence of Japan and Italy to the Declaration Between Great Britain, France, and Russia Engaging Not To Conclude Separate Peace].
- 16 *Oshu Senso; Sekai Taisen Gaiko Bunsho*, Vol. I; Gaimusho, Archives File Number Matsu 5. 2. 1. 27 *Oshu Senso ni Shina Hikiire Mondai Ikken* [Documents Relating to the Problem of Involving China in the European War]; and *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Series III, Vol. IX.
- 17 *Yamagata Aritomo Den*, Vol. III, pp. 942-946.
- 18 *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Series III, Vol. IX; Gaimusho, Archives File Number Matsu B. 1. 0. 0. J/R 4 (formerly file Number MT 2. 1. 1. 33), *Daiyonkai Nichi-Ro Kyoyaku Kankei Ikken Toshin Tetsudo Joto oyobi Shokako koko-ken ni kansuru Nichi-Ro Kobun Kokan wo fukumu* [Documents Relating to the Conclusion of the Fourth Russo-Japanese Agreement Including the Exchange of Notes between Russia and Japan Concerning the Transfer of Ownership of the Chinese Eastern Railway and Right of Navigation on the Sungari River] (hereinafter cited as *Daiyonkai Nichi-Ro Kyoyaku*), Part I; and
 Gaimusho, Archives File Number MT 6. 4. 4. 1 *Taisho Gonen Gaikoku Kihin no Raicho Kankei Zakken Bessatsu - Rokoku Kozoku Georugi Mihairobuichi Taiko Denka Raicho no Ken* [Documents Relating to Visits of Distinguished Foreign Guests – Special Volume Containing Documents Relating to the Visit of His Imperial Highness the Russian Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich in 1916].
- 19 Shuan Takahashi, *Sanko Iretsu [Distinguished Deeds of the Late Prince Yamagata]*, (Tokyo: Keibundo Shoten, 1924), pp. 116-117.
- 20 *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Series III, Vol. X.
- 21 *Daiyonkai Nichi-Ro Kyoyaku; Nichi-Ro Kosho Shi*, Vol. II; and *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Series III, Volume X.
- 22 Kozakov's report to the Tsar in *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Series III, Volume X.
- 23 It might be useful to add that the Elder Statesmen effectively blocked the appointment of Kato Komei to the prime ministership a few months later, in spite of the recommendation of outgoing Prime Minister Okuma. Historically, the recommendation of an outgoing prime minister has usually led to the appointment of his chosen successor.

Following the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese agreement half a year later, Yamagata, in a conversation which he asked to be kept

confidential, clearly described his role. He said that he had resolved not to miss the chance to conclude a Russo-Japanese alliance when the Russian Grand Duke visited Japan. Foreign Minister Ishii, however, showed his cold attitude and inhospitality to one of the members of the Duke's suite who had approached the Japanese Government on the subject of a Russo-Japanese agreement. This gave the Russians an impression of Japan's insincerity in its dealings with Russia. At this point, Ishii produced a second plan, this time in favor of Russo-Japanese friendship, which was approximately along the lines favored by the Elder Statesmen. Takahashi, pp. 114-119.

In his memoirs, Ishii paints a totally false picture, claiming that he was instrumental in the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese agreement. He states that he did everything in his power to prevent Russia from making a separate peace with Germany. He takes credit for Japan's sale of weapons to Russia, and claims that it was primarily Japan that wanted the agreement (sic!). Kikujiro Ishii, *Gaiko Yoroku* [Diplomatic Memoirs] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1930), pp. 126-129. See also an abridged translation by an American Consul, William R. Langdon, under the title *Diplomatic Commentaries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936).

- 24 The railroad sector that Russia was willing cede to Japan was identified as south of the Sungari River, i.e., in the Japanese sphere of influence in Manchuria, as defined in the secret Russo-Japanese agreement of 1907. The Japanese demanded the entire branch line including the sector north of the Sungari River which was clearly in the Russian sphere.
- 25 The record of negotiations in Petrograd is in *Daiyonkai Nichi-Ro Kyoyaku; Nichi-Ro Koshi-shi*, Vol. II; and *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Series III, Volume X.
- 26 See G. Kozakov, "Russko-Iaponskoe soglashenie 3 Iulia 1916 g." [The Russo-Japanese Agreement of July 3, 1916], Letter to the Editor, *Mezhdurodnaia Politika i Mirovoe khoziaistvo* [International Politics and World Economy], No. 6 (1918), pp. 59-61.