

Pertti Luntinen

**French Information
on the
RUSSIAN WAR PLANS
1880—1914**

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1. Preface

The history of Russia's war plans 1880—1914 has been told by A.M. Zaiončkovskii in 1926.¹ Since then the original plans have remained in the secrecy of the Soviet archives.² Not even Soviet scholars have been able to publish anything on the war plans, although the military organization and material preparation have been dealt with many times.³ But in the French war archives in the Castle of Vincennes there is a little additional

¹ A.M. Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny. Podgotovka Rossii k imperialističeskoj voine. Očerki voennoi podgotovki i pervonačal'nyh planov. Po arhivnym dokumentam. So vstupitel'noi statei M.N. Tuhačevskago. Štab RKKA, upravlenie po issledovaniju opyta vojn.* Moskva 1926.

A companion volume on Russia's preparations for naval war: M. Petrov, *Podgotovka Rossii k mirovoi voine na more. S predislavim M. Pavloviča. Štab RKKA, upravlenie po issledovaniju i ispol'zovaniju opyta vojn.* Moskva—Leningrad 1926.

² The Central Administration of the USSR Archives answered that they had no such material when I requested to see documents concerning the defence of the Baltic coasts during these years.

³ For instance, *Istorija pervoi mirovoi voiny 1914—1918 I—II*, AN SSSR i Ministerstva Oborona SSSR, Moskva 1975, pp. 195-200/I sketches the outline of Russian plans on the basis of Zaiončkovskii's and Petrov's books.

Further essential studies:

P.A. Zaiončkovskii, *Voennye reformy 1860—1870 godov v Rossii.* Moskva 1952.

L.G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkaja armija i flot v XIX veke. Voенno-ekonomičeskaja potencial Rossii.* Moskva 1973.

P.A. Zaiončkovskii, *Samoderžavie i russkaja armija na rubeže XIX—XX stoletijah, 1881—1903.* Moskva 1973.

K.F. Šacillo, *Rossija pred mirovoi voiny. Vooružennye sily carizma v 1905—1914 gg.* Akademija Nauk SSSR, naučnopopuljarnaja serija. Moskva 1974.

A short introduction is given as a background for his study by

Allan K. Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Old Army and the Soldiers' Revolt, March-April 1917.* Princeton University Press 1980.

information.⁴ The French military attachés succeeded rather well in their task of spying out the plans of the general staff in St. Petersburg, being representatives of the army that was *amie et alliée*.

I have not avoided repeating the main points of the story told by Zaiončkovskii, because his book has been out of print for half a century: originally it was written for service use in the Red Army. In addition, it is necessary to place the additional information brought out in this study within a general framework.

In the following study the story has been presented from the viewpoint of the military attaché, because it is of interest to see what the French knew of the Russian plans and how they tried to influence them. The reports of the attachés tally rather well with Zaiončkovskii's text. Consequently, even the additional information recounted here can, if treated with due care, be taken as true.

I have avoided retelling the diplomatic, economic or social background story because it has been dealt with in the numerous histories of the imperialist era.⁵ Only a short sketch of the main turning points is given to paint the background for the military aspect of the story.

The protocols of the meetings of the chiefs of general staffs have been published in the French collection of diplomatic documents,⁶ as well as some of the politically important reports of the military attaché. I have tried to refer also to the publication in my footnotes when relevant.

The development of the war plans is interesting history as

⁴ Etat-Major de l'armée de terre, Service historique, Chateau de Vincennes.

In footnote references: EMATSH + file number

Service Historique de la Marine, Chateau de Vincennes.

In footnote references: SHM + file number

Copies of the politically most important documents as well as the diplomatic reports are kept in Archives, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (nowadays: Archives et Documentation, Ministère des relations extérieures), Quai d'Orsay, Paris.

In footnote references: AMAE + series and volume number.

⁵ No bibliography can be attempted within the space of this study. The reader must be referred to the available handbooks and bibliographies.

⁶ *Documents diplomatiques français*, 1.ser. 1871—1900, I—XVI, Paris 1929—1959. 2. ser. 1901—1911, I—XIV, Paris 1930—1955. 3. ser. 1911—1914, I—XI, Paris 1929—1960.

In footnote references: DDF + series and volume number.

such. The plans reflect the reality of life, the desperate search for security in a threatening world, and the elusive dreams of domination and grandeur in competition with other armies. This is part of the prehistory of the Great War. The years 1880—1914 are often called the era of imperialism; imperialism is usually dealt with as an economic phenomenon, but it had a military side, too. This story of the military plans throws some additional light on the French influence on Russia's decisions, and on the influence of the Russian generals on the policy of their country.

Reports concerning the Russian plans in or near Finland, in the Baltic area, are of special interest for a Finnish writer. I have, however, tried to avoid giving undue weight to this secondary theatre of operations, the problems of which have been dealt with in detail elsewhere.⁷ Only the most salient features are described, with the necessary background information. Russia's war plans were one of the principal factors shaping the fate of all the Western provinces of the swollen empire.

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A grant by the Academy of Finland and the Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique made possible the study in the archives of Chateau de Vincennes and Quai d'Orsay, for which I am deeply grateful. Gratitude is due also to the Akademiija Nauk SSSR, which enabled me to study in the Lenin Library in Moscow. The University Libraries in Helsinki and Tampere have been most helpful. Many people have helped me with advice, discussion, or patiently listening to complaints about the impossibility of writing history. *Kalevan lukio* (The Kaleva Senior High School), my employer, magnanimously consented to grant me a lengthy leave of absence from my teaching duties. Dr. George Maude of the University of Turku has taken great pains to correct my English. Rauno Endén of the Finnish Historical Association has carried out the task of editing the text for publication in the Series of the Association. I should be

⁷ Tuomo Polvinen, *Die finnischen Eisenbahnen in den militärischen und politischen Plänen Russlands vor dem ersten Weltkrieg*. Helsinki 1962.
Pertti Luntinen, *Suomi Pietarin suojana ja uhkana venäläisten sotasuunnitelmissa 1854—1914*. With an English Summary: Finland, Shield and Threat for St. Petersburg. *Historiallinen Arkisto* 79, Helsinki 1983.

extremely happy if the finished product would in any way be worthy of the trouble so many people have taken to help me in my study.

2. The Franco-Russian Alliance Is Born

2.1. The Diplomatic Background

The alliance of Russia with France was born out of mutual isolation. Russia had been made to feel her loneliness in 1878 when her overblown appetites in the Near East had remained unsatiated in the Berlin Congress in spite of her previous victorious campaign. Then there had been the conflict with England in 1885 on the Afghan borders: a war with England would have involved also a naval threat against Russia's Baltic and/or Black Sea coasts. At the same time the Bulgarians had ungratefully emphasized their independence from Russia. Even though Prince Alexander was successfully ousted, the Bulgarians elected another German, Ferdinand of Coburg, as their Prince. The consequent complications, especially the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1886, brought about the danger of a further increase in Austrian influence in the Balkans. Russian frustration and jealousy was directed against Bismarck's Germany. The *Dreikaiserbund* crumbled. The Reinsurance Treaty of 1887 only papered over the cracks in the relations of Russia and Germany, especially as there was much bickering on financial and commercial questions. As a forerunner of the future political convergence, the Russian ministry of finance turned to the Paris market in its search for loans.

The French, for their part, had been isolated by Bismarck's policy since 1871. They had also twice felt threatened with war, in 1875 and again in 1886—1887, although the danger

most probably existed only in their imagination. Nor were the French able to forget that they had lost their position as the principal great power to Germany; neither were they able to forgive the loss of the two provinces.

In 1879—1882 a Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy was formed. Neither Russia nor France alone was strong enough to wage war against the Triple Alliance. The French general staff estimated the military forces of these powers as follows:

	infantry divisions	cavalry divisions	cannons	effectives
Germany	73	9	3564	1550 000
Italy	22	2	1092	360 000
Austria	42	8	1776	<u>900 000</u>
the Triple Alliance				2810 000
France	75	7	3870	1550 000
Russia	66	20	3290	<u>1600 000</u>
the projected Dual Alliance				3150 000 ⁸

Thus together, France and Russia seemed to be stronger than the Triple Alliance.

It was not easy to reach an understanding, however. There was the ideological, political and psychological difference between the tsarist autocracy and the atheist republic. The political aims of the two states were also somewhat divergent. The French soldiers hoped for military co-operation against Germany, and the French chauvinists dreamed of Russian support for the revanche. Katkov and other influential Panslavists spurred Alexander III on to approach the French. But Katkov was a dangerous man, because

"he has only one dream, to launch France against Germany at her own risk and peril, in order to be free to act in the Balkans. The high command of the Russian army is afraid of Germany but sees an eventual conflict with Austria under very seducing colours. That is why Ignat'ev, Černjaev, Skobelev, Aksakov and others incite the French to revanche".⁹

The Emperor Alexander III was cautious enough to resist the

⁸ "Note" s.d., AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 30, p. 196—

⁹ "Au sujet du rôle probable de la Russie en cas de conflit entre la France et l'Allemagne", Moulin to war minister 23.VI 1887. EMATHS 7 N 1471.

pressure of Russian as well as of French chauvinists, in spite of his own resentment against Germany. For instance, during the dangerous year of 1887 the French understood that they could not expect any other help from Russia except good offices in case of an unprovoked German attack.¹⁰

Alexander decided to proceed only after William II's "new men" got the Kaiser to renounce the Reinsurance Treaty in 1890. In the same year the naval might of England seemed to be added to the strength of the Triple Alliance. Already in 1887 the treaty confirming the Mediterranean status quo had been signed between England, Italy, and Austria. This had been Bismarck's counterstroke to Russia's plans in the Near East. And now in 1890 the agreement on the exchange of Zanzibar and Heligoland had the appearance of sealing the Anglo-German entente. Russia's traditional enemy was joining her new adversary.

Discussions were started between French and Russian representatives. The result was an exchange of letters on 22.VIII 1891 between Ribot, the French minister for foreign affairs, and Mohrenheim, the Russian ambassador. They declared their identical aim of preserving peace, and promised to help each other in case of an attack by the Triple Alliance. The French wanted to limit the agreement to Europe, because they did not wish to be drawn into a war against England in consequence of an eventual Russo-English conflict somewhere in Afghanistan or China.¹¹ The chiefs of the French and Russian general staffs were then authorized to continue their discussions on the details of the military co-operation in case of war.¹² — The diplomatic and military discussions were kept secret, but the new orientation was demonstrated with a French naval visit to Kronstadt. And in 1893 admiral Avellan's squadron was received in Toulon with acclaim.¹³

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¹¹ MAE to Russian Ambassador 27. VIII 1891. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 30
Note secrète pour le ministre 1.X 1896. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 32.

¹² Freycinet, minister of war, to Ribot 9. VIII 1891. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 30

¹³ A recent study of the diplomatic prehistory of the Dual Alliance is given by George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order*. Franco-Russian Relations, 1875—1890. Princeton University Press 1979

A classic of undiminished value is Baron Boris Nolde, *L'alliance franco-russe*. Les origines du système diplomatique d'avant-guerre. Institut d'études slaves de l'université de Paris, Collection historique VII Paris 1936

2.2. The Military Convention

The military discussions were started in 1890 parallel with the diplomatic talks which led to the exchange of letters forming the basis of the alliance. Generals Obručev and Boisdeffre, the Russian and French chiefs of staff, had been in private contact for many years and had striven for the alliance. Now they informed each other of their respective plans for a war against Germany.

Obručev stated that if the Germans attacked France with the bulk of their army — at least 2/3 of their forces — Russia could attack Germany from Poland. If 2/3 of the Germans should turn to the east, Russia would be compelled to resort to defence with delaying tactics. Gurko, the commander-in-chief in Poland, would draw his forces to Brest(-Litovsk), leaving 100 000 men to delay the German advance by destroying all railway lines, towns, and villages. Obručev suggested that the French should retire behind their border fortifications and let the German attack break up against them. But whatever the Germans did and whatever the French suffered, Russia was going to throw her principal forces against Austria. It was an absolute necessity to finish off Austria as soon as possible. She would grow in strength if given time, but if Russia attacked her at the very beginning, she would collapse, because her Slav peoples would not fight against Russia. Then Germany would be left alone against Russia and France.

This cannot have been very comforting to Boisdeffre, but he was not able to make Obručev change these plans. But he "understood" that Alexander III would not repeat Alexander II's "mistake" in 1870. "The Emperor knew" that the consequences would be grave also to Russia if France were to be destroyed. The agreed basis of military co-operation was that a German attack against France would be answered with Russian mobilization.¹⁴

Next summer the discussions were continued. The French general proposed that the convention be made against the Triple Alliance, not only against Germany, lest she should wait

¹⁴ Boisdeffre to Freycinet 15/20 VIII 1890: AMAE C.P. Russie N.S. 30. DDF VIII/1 n:o 165

until France was exhausted by a campaign against Italy and then intervene and dictate the peace. Obručev agreed, of course, because Austria was for Russia of even more importance than Italy for France. We shall see later how France tried to get out of her obligations in respect of an Austro-Russian war. At this point, however, it was agreed that any act of aggression by the Triple Alliance was to be answered by an immediate mobilization in France and Russia, and the war was to be started on the first day of the mobilization. Obručev said that he was planning for the launching of the Russian cavalry over the frontier to delay the mobilization and concentration of the enemy.

Boisdeffre tried again to make Obručev change his mind about the primacy of Austria. The French general explained that the principal enemy, the most dangerous enemy, had to be defeated first. It would be dangerous if Russia attacked Austria or if France attacked Italy first. The secondary enemies could easily be defeated after Germany was beaten.

But Obručev could not admit this point of view. He saw no symmetry between Italy and Austria as enemies. It was of the utmost necessity for Russia to destroy Austria and dissolve her empire.

This led the discussion to eventual war aims. Obručev said that Russia wanted to liberate her brother Slavs in Galicia. They were oppressed by the Austrian Poles, who also fomented discontent in the (Russian) Kingdom of Poland. Russia also needed the outlet of the Turkish Straits in order not to be left hemmed in the Black Sea, with all her seaports at the mercy of the English fleet. But Obručev did not want Constantinople (in the 1915 treaty it was to be made an international city) nor any other conquests; Russia was already too extensive without them. For the Russian general it was "self-evident" that France wanted Alsace and Lorraine back. But it was better to defeat Germany before discussing advancing the French frontier to the Rhine, or the dismembering of the German empire.

Boisdeffre did not say much about these questions, at least in his report. The French general staff was very much subordinate to the civilian government. Neither had Obručev any authority to discuss grand political designs. But the Russian army and its leaders were subordinate only to the emperor, not to any government; and they were not known for any modesty in their

appetite for conquest. Of course, Obručev aired his general ideas and had no definite plans of action. But his discussion reflected the main features of the war aims that Russia strove for in 1914—1917.

The generals agreed that neither party wanted to start a war. If a convention was to be made, it must be a defensive convention. But both were ready to wage a war if compelled to do so.¹⁵

It is idle to discuss whether the alliance was defensive or offensive; these generals were no pacifists, nor, for that matter, was the emperor. The alliance was defensive as far as both parties were afraid of a German attack and wanted reciprocal support against it. And neither was willing to be dragged into a war under unfavourable conditions, nor to bear the odium of declaring war. But if a war had to be waged, it was better to win it, and to get some advantage out of it: the satisfaction of grievances, conquests, power, the permanent weakening of the enemy. The problem of deciding whether a war is offensive or defensive is more of a political or propagandist question than a historical one.

The preamble of the convention thus declared:

"France and Russia, animated with a desire to conserve peace, have composed the present note exclusively with a view of a defensive war provoked by the forces of the Triple Alliance against one or other or both of these Powers".

A principle of complete reciprocity was decided on: if one of the signatories was attacked, the other was to help with all available force.

Then there was much discussion on fixing the amount of available force. France was to concentrate practically all her troops against Germany, leaving only 1/6 of them, or 10 divisions, against Italy or in Africa. Thus she would be able to attack Germany with 65 divisions or 1300 000 men. Germany would not be able to transfer any troops from her western frontier to the east against Russia.

The French hoped that Russia would adopt an identical

¹⁵ Boisdeffre to Freycinet 16.VII 1891. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 30. DDDF VIII/1, n:o 424

policy vis-à-vis Austria and leave only an indispensable minimum of forces against that power. The French general staff estimated that 11 Russian army corps would be enough to fend off the 14 Austrian corps. Thus there would be left 11 corps or 33 divisions or 700 000—800 000 men against Germany, which was enough to defeat the German army with the help of the 65 French divisions. The French admitted the problems of Russian mobilization and concentration: the state of Russia's communications meant that her military measures were much slower than Germany's and slower even than Austria's. But if the Germans saw at the beginning of the war that Russia was going to march, they would be compelled to keep part of their troops on their eastern frontier.¹⁶

Obručev and Vannovskii — the minister of war — received the French proposition "with favour", but they had "a certain tendency to be preoccupied with Austria more than we should wish...". Obručev promised that he would organize demonstrations on the German border in order to worry the enemy and thereby prevent her from transferring her forces to the west. Obručev estimated that the Triple Alliance would attack Russia with 13 Austrian, 3 Italian and 7 German army corps and with reserve troops, which would leave only 12 German and 9 Italian corps against France. He believed it to be of the utmost importance to attack the Austrian troop concentrations in Galicia first. A prompt victory over the Austrians would engender a respectful attitude in the Rumanians; but an even more important aspect was the fact that such a victory would be the precondition for a march on Breslau. That was the only direction of attack which could constitute a vital threat to the German heartland. Any attack further to the north would run into the German fortifications at Königsberg, on the Vistula, or at Posen.¹⁷

Boisdeffre admitted feeling *assez triste* because of Obručev's tenacity. Now the French would have wanted the convention to be written against Germany only, not the Triple Alliance. The Austro-Russian rivalry was of no interest to them, and they did not like the eventuality of a Russo-Austrian war that might

¹⁶ "Note" s.d. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 30, p. 196—

¹⁷ "Note" by Moulin 16. VII 1892. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 31

involve them in a war against Germany. They dreamed of a convention where "we would remain free if Germany kept the peace".

But of course Russia could not accept a convention of this kind. She was afraid lest Austria or Romania started a war, while Germany waited until Russia was exhausted — the argument was identical to the one the French put forward about the Italian danger. On the other hand, this was a rather theoretical view, because it was not very probable that Germany would keep out of an Austro-Russian conflict. Thus the accepted principle that the convention should be directed against the Triple Alliance was not changed.

The French, however, had a further problem. They could not be too reassured about Obručev's demonstrations on the German frontier. They were afraid that these troops might remain inactive observers, leaving the Germans free to concentrate all their troops against France. For a long time Obručev withstood fixing the number of troops for the operation against Germany, but in the end he yielded to the French insistence and named the number. The French, on their part, promised to attack Germany with all their forces,¹⁸ which was easy, of course, because they had no other choice (as they thought).

The discussion was also concerned with innumerable matters of detail, and it was further delayed by the apprehensions of the Russian emperor. He deemed it vitally important to keep the convention secret, lest the Germans immediately attack on learning that they could no longer hope for Russian neutrality in the event of a Franco-German war. The Russians also insisted that any new Schnaebele-affair, questions, in short, of mere amour-propre, would not be provocation enough to be regarded as a *casus foederis*. Alexander III was also afraid that, far from protecting Russia, the alliance would be an instrument of French revanchism that would drag Russia into war. The instability of French governments also caused much worry to

¹⁸ Ribot to Montebello 22.VII 1892. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 31
Boisdeffre to war minister 10.VIII 1892. AMAE C.P. Russie N.S. 31. DDF IX/
1 n:o 447
MAE to war ministry 12.VIII 1892. AMAE C.P. Russie N.S. 31

the emperor.¹⁹

The convention was signed by the chiefs of staff in August 1892, but it took more than a year for it to be ratified. Alexander's doubts on French reliability were allayed somewhat by the warm reception of the Russian fleet at Toulon in 1893. But of course the sheer necessity of the convention was the decisive factor. Germany was reported to be increasing her military forces. Thus the military convention was ratified by an exchange of notes between the Russian and French ministers for foreign affairs on 24.XII 1893/4.I.1894.

In the convention the participants promised that if France or Russia were attacked by Germany, or by Italy or Austria with German support, Russia/France was to employ all available forces to attack Germany. In the event of the Triple Alliance or one of the powers thereto mobilizing, France and Russia, on receiving the first information of it, and without any further communication, were to mobilize immediately and simultaneously the totality of their forces and to concentrate them as near their borders as possible. France was to attack Germany with 1300 000 men, and Russia with 700 000 or 800 000 men. These troops were to engage the Germans in full force in order to compel them to fight simultaneously in the east and in the west.

It was further agreed that the general staffs of the contracting powers were to concert their efforts to prepare for the execution of the agreed measures. They were to exchange with each other all available information on the armies of the Triple Alliance. The ways and means of war-time communication were to be studied.

It was agreed to keep the convention secret, as the emperor had insisted. It was to remain in operation as long as the Triple Alliance lasted. If the war broke out, neither party to the convention was to sign a separate peace.

If the Austro-German Alliance of 1879 had been the first definite act in the formation of the alliances of the great war, the Franco-Russian agreement was the second step in the

¹⁹ Boisdeffre to war minister 18.VIII 1892. AMAE C.P. Russie N.S. 31. DDF IX/1, n:o 461

polarization of European powers. It remained one of the basic factors of European politics for twenty years. But it influenced international and internal politics in many different ways, and it was only after many twists and turns that the articles put on paper in 1894 were transformed into the bloody reality of 1914.

At the moment of the signing of the military convention, Matton, a young French officer of the general staff, was on a mission to Russia. His report is of considerable interest, because it throws light on some of the ideas behind the convention. He estimated that the defensive alliance with Russia was useful, but an offensive alliance would have been a mistake. Russia was too slow and too much inclined to the defensive, and it would not have been advantageous for France to declare war on the Triple Alliance or to let Russia drag her into an unequal battle. But the international situation remained intolerable. The incessant formidable armaments race was inevitably leading to war. There was no sense for France to remain waiting for a war which might break out while conditions were unfavourable for her, with an ally who might endanger only a few provinces while France's very existence was in question. It was better to provoke events than to submit to them. France had better work for the disintegration of the Triple Alliance, profiting from its numerous elements of discord. Then, without hesitation, Russia was to be pushed to declare war on Germany, which would be easy because of their tense relations. A war between Russia and Germany was all to the advantage of France. Diplomacy, the art of deceiving dexterously, could serve here by making Russia beautiful promises of effective support, and at the same time promising Germany France's neutrality at the price of some compensation. Then, her troops mobilized and concentrated, France could intervene at a propitious moment and dictate her conditions both to Germany and to Russia. It was an undeniable fact that Russia, France's present ally, would be her enemy one day in the future, when Germany was beaten. Russia was presently the enemy of Germany, but would always be the enemy of any power that prevented her from acquiring supremacy in Europe.²⁰

²⁰ Mission en Russie du Cm. Matton, "Mémoire sur la Russie" 29.XII 1892. EMATSH 7 N 1484

Matton's refreshingly Macchiavellian report reflects his personal way of thinking, of course, and it is no evidence of official French planning. It is, however, a useful reminder that nations *alliées* are not always so very *amies*. Allied powers do not become one power; they pursue their own aims and they are in concert only as far as it suits them. The report shows how *raison d'état* was cheerfully accepted as the moral yardstick in international relations, and how war was held to be both inevitable and acceptable. Of course, in itself the report did not have any practical, immediate importance.

2.3. The Russian Army by the End of the Eighties

Up to and during Alexander II's time the Russian army was recruited from serfs who served for 25 years. There was a motley of establishments, units and high commands, united often only through the sovereign as the supreme warlord. D.A. Miljutin, however, reformed the army during his tenure of office as war minister from 1861 to 1881. The various military services and installations were combined into military districts, with an over-all peacetime command centred in the war ministry. Some commanders of military districts were also charged with civil administration as governor-generals. In the frontier districts (Vilna, Warsaw, Kiev, Caucasia) these commanders were designated wartime army commanders. Miljutin tried, in addition, to improve the educational and professional level of his army, and military discipline was made more reasonable.

Compulsory national service was introduced in 1874, with a service period of six years, gradually shortened to three years in the infantry and four years in other branches of the army, with five years in the navy. After active service the men were transferred to the reserve for 13—15 years, and then up to the age of 43 they were enrolled in the militia, which also included the numerous men freed from active service. Men with

education could serve for a couple of years and become reserve officers.

The annual contingent of conscripts

1870	140,000
1880	235,000
1890	250,000

Thus, by 1889, the peacetime army consisted of nearly a million men, with three million trained reservists and a few million untrained militia. The number of men in the age classes of military service was 13,160,000 or 11,65 % of a population of 113 million.²¹

Active troops were organized into army corps, of which there existed eighteen by 1887, with two further added in 1888. Their distribution in the military districts can be seen in map 1.

The Guards, Grenadier and Caucasian corps consisted of three infantry divisions each, the army corps I — XVII of two divisions each. Two cavalry divisions were attached to the Guards and Caucasian corps, 14 of the rest had one cavalry division each. In addition there were three detached infantry divisions (of which one in Finland) and four of cavalry; in all 48 infantry divisions and 22 cavalry divisions. There was a brigade of artillery for each infantry division, and a battalion of engineers for each corps. Four rifle brigades formed a light infantry.²²

Then there were the cadre formations for reserve, militia and fortress troops, various local detachments, military schools, installations, services, administrations. Frontier guards were under the ministry of finance, and a corps of gendarmes was under the ministry of the interior.

The Asiatic nomads were freed from military service.
The Caucasian Mohammedans were subject to

²¹ "Mobilisation 1892". EMATSH 7 N 1508 (a collection of numerical information on the Russian army. Tallies sufferably well with Beskrovnyi's and Zaiončkovskii's statistics). All statistics in these reports must be taken with a great deal of scepticism. From report to report there is much variation, which may be due either to the unreliability of the informants or the difficulties in compiling the basic data.

²² = ²¹

military service in principle, but in practice they paid a temporary military tax instead. There were a few voluntary national units. The Crimean Tartars formed six squadrons, the Dagestani had a cavalry regiment and three militia sotnias, the Ossets two sotnias. The Turkmen irregular cavalry consisted of three squadrons. The protectorate of Bukhara had a small army of its own.²³

The Finns were freed from military service in 1809, but the autonomous Finnish government formed a few enlisted battalions in the years 1812—1830. After that only one rifle battalion, part of the Guards corps, remained. The ancient Swedish territorial military system, the *indelta*, was replaced by modern national service in 1878. Miljutin had hoped that Finns would serve on an equal footing with other Imperial subjects, in the interest of military uniformity and Russification. But Finland succeeded in organizing a tiny army of nine battalions and one dragoon regiment of its own, charged with the defence of Finland and only in this way participating in the military effort of the empire.

The Cossacks continued their lifelong service. Each cavalry division consisted of one Cossack regiment in addition to the three regular cavalry regiments. Further Cossack detachments served along the wild Asian frontiers.

Starting a war in the good old days before universal military conscription was a leisurely affair and did not cause much prior staff work. But for the modern war millions of reservists had to be called up and armed, the detachments had to be mobilized and transported to the frontier; and everything had to be done faster than the enemy was doing it. Therefore general staffs had to be established to undertake the task of planning mobilization and troop concentration, and sketching out the first battle as a basis for the planning work. Moltke's

²³ "Service militaire des musulmans en Russie". A report 23.X 1909. EMATSH 7 N 1536

planning was given credit for the Prussian victories in 1864, 1866 and 1870—71. Other armies organized their brain-power on the model of the Prussian Great General Staff.

Miljutin made his general staff a department of the war ministry. There was much to do: it had taken six months to mobilize four army corps in 1859 to guard the Austrian border during the Franco-Austrian war in Italy. A bigger army had been mobilized in two and a half months against the Polish rebels in 1863 — not rapidly enough, notwithstanding the increased speed if compared with 1859. In the seventies planning for war was interrupted by a war which had been neither expected nor planned for, but Miljutin succeeded in sending a bigger army — and sending it faster than before — to the Balkan frontier in 1877. But it was not until the eighties that detailed plans were completed.²⁴

The powers with whom Russia expected to have to fight were Austria and Germany. The French military attaché reported that in 1882 the Russians calculated that they would be ready to fight in about two months, on the 50—70th day after mobilization. This was much slower than the potential enemies. That was why so many corps were positioned close to the frontier. Supported by numerous fortresses they had to wage a defensive war until the whole of the army was concentrated and ready to operate. Maps 2—3 give the positions of the armies as reported by the military attaché in 1882 and 1884, with map 4 by Zaiončkovskii for comparison. The details of the plan were adjusted annually.

The crisis of 1887 caused the military attaché to send further reports to Paris. A host of 1300 000 men was to be ready to fight on the 13—14th day, and the strength was to be increased to 2000 000 men by the 25—27th day. The principal or central army was to be commanded by General Gurko, the governor-general of Poland. Grand Duke Vladimir, with Bobrikov as his chief of staff, commanded in Vilna the Northern army, with the task of guarding Gurko's flank. A German landing was expected on Courland, and that was why Vladimir's army was comparatively strong, with one corps at Riga. The capital and the coast of the Gulf of Finland were guarded by one corps. The commander of the Southern army was not designated, but

²⁴ P. Zaiončkovskii, *Voennye reformy* p. 79—, 280—

General Dragomirov was subsequently appointed commander of the Kiev Military district. This army had the task of securing Gurko's left flank against the Austrians. One army corps was to defend the Black Sea coast.

The several armies consisted of the following corps:

Northern army	II, III, IV, IX, X
Principal army	V, VI, XIII, XIV, Guards
Southern army	VIII, XI, XII, Grenadiers
Reserve at Orel	XV
Gulf of Finland	I
Black Sea	VII

The first army corps consisted of three divisions: 23rd in Estonia, 37th in St. Petersburg and Kronstadt, 24th with the Finnish rifle battalions on the northern coast of the Gulf.²⁵

Two further army corps were added to the strength of the Russian army in 1888. Consequently, the field armies were strengthened, with their centre of gravity moved northwards or southwards, according to whether the war was to be waged against Austria, or Germany, or both. The reserves were positioned behind the most important frontiers in White Russia or the Ukraine.

Potential enemies	Germany and Austria	Germany	Austria
Russian armies	Russian army corps		
Northern	II, III, IV, XVI	II, III, IV, XV, XVI Grenadiers	II, III, IV, XVI
Central	V, VI, XIV, XV Guards	V, VI, XI, XIV Guards	V, VI, XIV, XV
Southern	VIII, IX, XI, XII Grenadiers	VIII, IX, XII	VIII, IX, XI, XII Guards
Reserve	X, XIII, XVII	X, XIII, XVII	X, XIII, XVII, Grenadiers
Baltic coast	I	I	I
Black Sea	VII	VII	VII

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²⁵ Moulin to war minister 9.VI 1887, 24.II 1887, 25.XI 1887. EMATSH 7 N 1471

²⁶ Moulin to war minister 7.VI 1888, 10.X 1889. EMATSH 7 N 1471

In this plan the Finnish rifle battalions formed part of the reserve at Kursk, Minsk or Gomel, according to whether both Germany and Austria, or only Germany or Austria were the enemy. — Taking the Finnish conscripted battalions outside the Grand Duchy would have been against the 1878 Finnish law of military service. Had the Finns known of these Russian plans the constitutional crisis of 1899 might have broken out ten years earlier. The French military attaché did not notice this question. It is not known whether the Russian general staff was aware of the constitutional aspect of this detail of their plans. It was a couple of years later, in 1891, that the emperor ordered the revision of the Finnish military organization, which took place in 1901.

The wartime strength of a division was about 20 000 men in the infantry and 8000 in the cavalry. Thus an army corps consisted of 40 000—70 000 men. Nearly two million reservists were to be called up in the first round to fill up the active units and to form the reserve divisions. After that there remained the second call-up of the elderly reservists, about half a million men, and the first call-up of the militia, circa two million men. The untrained militia was to be conscripted only in extreme danger to defend the country.²⁷

There seemed to be no lack of men. The problem was to get them to the battle area in time. That was difficult because of the size of the empire and her sparse net of communications. There were only a few railway lines leading to the western frontier from the interior of the country. The main lines and the army corps to be transported are indicated on map 5.

The French military attaché Moulin also studied the reason for leaving comparatively strong units out of the main armies to guard the Baltic region. The Russian Baltic fleet was clearly inferior to the German fleet. It was not able seriously to menace the German coasts, nor was it able to defend Russia's

²⁷ "Au sujet du nouveau plan de mobilisation 14". Moulin 29.V 1890. EMATSH 7 N 1472

own coasts, neither against a small violation nor against a serious disembarkation. There was no promise of improvement for some years to come. The German coasts were well fortified and thus Germany needed only a small number of second-rank troops for coastal defence. The Russian coasts, on the contrary, were open from Memel to Narva and exposed to violations, as was the Finnish coast outside the fortress of Sveaborg. Kronstadt was well armed, and its approaches were narrow and well protected with mine barrages and small torpedo boats. This fortress protected St. Petersburg and the bottom of the Gulf. The nearest point to the capital open for an disembarkation was Krasnye Gorki between Oranienbaum and Narva. However, the coast was unapproachable for part of the year because of ice. The only area where the sea never froze was between Memel and Vindava; in the Gulf of Riga the sea froze only for a short time. Therefore the Germans had their best chance on the Courland coasts. In addition there were railway lines available there, and the local population was well disposed towards the Germans.

The defence works were nothing to speak of. Dünamünde was a dilapidated fort. Until Libau was completed — started in 1890, "it will take ten years at the pace the Russians construct their forts" — the Russian general staff had reason to be apprehensive of a German landing on Courland. A landing force of 30 000—40 000 men was to be expected. Therefore it was necessary to have an equal number of Russian troops in these regions. The rest of the coast could be protected by a strong mobile division supported by the Sveaborg and Kronstadt garrisons, depot troops, second-line reserve detachments, and the militia.

There was an additional explanation for retaining so many troops behind the frontier. A number of army corps had to be left out of the original troop concentration because of the inadequacy of the railway network. Afterwards they could be sent to one or another theatre of war according to the circumstances. This reserve army could also be said to include the corps left on the coast, "if a position so dispersed can be so called".²⁸

Later Moulin had further detailed information on the 24th division in Finland and the 23rd division in Reval being sent to the frontier: "The state of the railways doesn't allow the

transport of these divisions to the army of Vilna or Warsaw until a latish date, towards the 50th day".²⁹

The 24th division was later taken out of Finland to form part of the new XVIII army corps in Estonia. A new rifle brigade was created to replace it, because it was deemed too dangerous for Russian prestige in Finland to leave only reserve formations and the Finnish battalions in the Grand Duchy.

2.4. The Russian Ally Evalued in 1892

Matton, whom we met above, was, among other tasks, charged with making an evaluation of the military importance of France's new ally. He reported that as a rule the Russians liked France and detested Austria and Germany, who were interfering with Russian interests in every way. — This was obvious enough since it was the reason why Russia had concluded the alliance, in the first place.

The Russian soldier Matton regarded as generally well-built, but of limited intelligence; absolutely obedient, but without initiative and individuality. The Russian officer had often only an indifferent education and rarely liked working, "carelessness being a trait of the Slav character". The Guards officer had plenty of wealth but little knowledge; he was brilliant in salons and bars, but dissipated and a gambler; his bravery could not be doubted but his skill could not be trusted.

The studies in the general staff academy were better organized than in France. The three arms were able to act in liaison and had a common tactical doctrine. Otherwise everything else was retarded in the Russian army; the wheels

²⁸ Moulin to war minister 5.VII 1890. EMATSH 7 N 1472

²⁹ Moulin to war minister 1.VII 1890. EMATSH 7 N 1472

were badly greased. Promotion was rarely decided on merit, nearly always on favour. The Russians were a people who did not wish anything better than to wage war, but their natural nonchalance prevented them from taking pains in the preparations for it. The matériel of the first line seemed to be complete and well maintained. But the infantry rifle was still in the course of being replaced with a new model; and Russia was surely to be one of the last great powers to adopt the modern cannon.³⁰

At this time several other French officers visited Russia to get acquainted with the new ally. Their reports are often stereotyped, but nevertheless they include plenty of information. Several studies on the Russian army were made on the basis of these reports and other available information. A typical example, and one commended by his superior officers, was compiled by Captain Paul Dreyfus.³¹ He stated that the Russian soldier had been distinguished for his endurance during the painful expedition in the Balkans, and his heroism at Plevna was well remembered. He was not the automaton the German soldier was, forged by the Prussian dressage. On the contrary the Russian soldier was treated by his officers with a certain benevolence, which contrasted well with the sharpness of the Prussian officers.

Recruiting non-commissioned officers, Dreyfus went on, was difficult, because there were no middle classes in Russia.

The cream of officers was educated in the Corps of Pages, in the cadet schools, and in the military schools. The great majority of officers were produced in the junker schools. After serving six years in the ranks even a private could be sent to a junker school and then promoted officer; but such officers were never appointed to vacancies in the west. The instruction in the Nicholaeian Academy of the General Staff was brilliant and up to date, but the officers were kept under a pedantic discipline,

³⁰ Mission en Russie du Cm. Matton. "Mémoire sur la Russie". 29.XII 1892. EMATSH 7 N 1484

³¹ Travail d'étude du capitaine Paul Dreyfus de l'Etat-Major de la 32^e Division en 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1484.
Paul Dreyfus was not THE Dreyfus, who was Alfred, nor his brother, who was Mathieu

and they remained strangers to the troops. The general level of education of officers was inferior to the corresponding French level. Seniority was the principal ground for promoting officers.

The author noted with special interest the teaching of tactics by General Dragomirov, commander of the Kiev military district. He was designated commander-in-chief of the Southern or South-Western army, which had to attack the Austrians at the very beginning of the war. This general stressed the virtues of assault over firing: "pula dura, štyk molodec" (bullet is stupid, bayonet is plucky; Suvorov seems to have taught this doctrine). Only the cold weapon was able to give decisive results, while firing from a distance corresponded too well with the instinct of personal safety. — This was to be a costly way of thinking in 1914.

Dreyfus believed that the Russian army might have been very powerful if it had been organized in the German fashion, utilizing to the maximum effect the total male population. Perhaps this would be done later, thought Dreyfus, when the alliance with France had encouraged Russia decide to wrench from Germany the European hegemony, which the latter had won twenty years earlier with her victories. — The passage indicates a lack of understanding of the importance of social, economic and industrial factors in war and military organization. It was customary then to take into account only the standing peacetime military strength of a country, because only a short, decisive campaign was expected. — However, even at that the current Russian army was stronger than its German opponent:

Russian and German military power compared, 1892

	Russia	Germany
population, million	119	49
regiments	193	173
squadrons	346	465
batteries	435	494
fortress companies	229	149
sapper companies	97	128
officers	33 829	28 853
men	858 948	569 764
horses	143 964	96 844

Of reserve troops there were 28 regiments in European Russia, 8 regiments in Caucasia and nine battalions in Asia. The fifth company in each reserve battalion was intended to form the cadre of a second call-up reserve regiment.

The difficulties in Russian troop mobilization and concentration were due to the size of the empire. European Russia was ten times the size of France, and Asiatic Russia extended to 16 million square kilometres. This made simultaneous action with France nearly impossible. It was true that a great part of Russia's forces were garrisoned near her western frontier: 25 infantry divisions and 13 cavalry divisions in the military districts of Warsaw, Vilna and Kiev, plus 17 infantry and 5 cavalry division in the St. Petersburg, Moscow and Odessa districts. But even this area was six times bigger than France. Troop concentration was slow because of the defects of the railway network: the small number of strategic lines, the lack of double track, the sparse network. Germany would be ready to attack on the eighth day, while twelve Austrian corps would be mobilized and ready to march on the twenty-fourth day. Thus Russia could not help adopting a defensive attitude during the first weeks of the war. Strong fortifications were being constructed near the border, and the army corps of the Warsaw, Vilna, and Kiev districts constituted solid covering forces.

Dreyfus had the same idea that the Russians toyed with later: perhaps it was preferable for Russia to evacuate Poland and withdraw her troops to the interior of the empire so as to have complete security during mobilization.

The captain concluded that the situation was a gloomy one for France. Germany was free to leave only a small number of army corps on her eastern frontier, and France would have to fight the total might of the enemy alone at the beginning of the war. Russia would not be saved, either: after beating France the Germans would be free to transfer their army to the east to make an end of Russia.

Therefore it was of stringent necessity for Russia to perfect her means of troop mobilization and concentration and arming so as to compel Germany to dispose at least a half of her army corps on the eastern frontier at the beginning of the war.

This was to be the recurring theme in the general staff discussions for two decades.

A third officer, Commandant (Major) Chirlonchon, visited the Warsaw military district. He received a favourable impression of the Russian army there. It possessed the essential qualities of a good army: discipline, sobriety, tenacity, and courage.

But great problems existed in the frontier areas. Chirlonchon believed that the Polish hatred of Russia could not perhaps be sparked off as easily as in 1863, but nevertheless it was deeply felt. The government had done nothing to rally the population; it only tried to subjugate the Poles through a hard system of oppression. The army did not trust the Poles. A maximum of 4—5 Polish officers was admitted to any regiment, and no Poles at all were accepted in the Guards or on the general staff. Polish recruits were dispersed in far-away regiments. Consequently, the regiments posted in Poland had to be filled up with reservists from the interior of the empire when a mobilization occurred.

Also the Jews, of whom there were a great number in Poland, felt a disguised but profound antipathy to Russia.³²

The Polish railways were ordered to replace all Polish personnel with Russians by 1893³³ in spite of protests by Gurko and his railway officer Palicyn. The government explained in an official journal that the great number of Poles employed by the railways constituted a permanent danger because of the strategic importance of the lines traversing the country.

"It must not be concluded that the government suspects all Poles, of whom a great number, we willingly acknowledge, have served dutifully for long years; but the government is convinced of the necessity of ensuring the complete security of the lines linking the interior of the empire with its frontiers".³⁴

The ability of the Russian government to win over nationalities like Poles was somewhat limited. There were similar problems in Finland and Caucasia, too.

³² "Compte rendu d'un voyage en Russie, exécuté par monsieur le Commandant Laurent Chirlonchon en 1893". EMATSH 7 N 1484

³³ Ambassador in Petersburg to MAE to war ministry 27.VII 1892. EMATSH 7 N 1480

³⁴ Ambassador in Petersburg to MAE to war ministry 18.VIII 1892. EMATSH 7 N 1480

2.5. Troop Mobilization and Concentration in 1890—1897

Matton had also pondered the problems of Russian mobilization. He reckoned that there were about 600 000 men on the western frontier. Active troops from the Moscow and St. Petersburg districts were able to arrive on the fifteenth day, and all mobilized reserves from European Russia would be concentrated by the thirtieth day. Thus Russia would be adopting a defensive attitude in the beginning of the war, wrote Matton, at a time when France would have to fight alone against three powers, or four if England were to join the Triple Alliance, for a month. Germany would certainly concentrate all her might in Lorraine and Alsace, and perhaps she would buy Russia off by compensating her in the Orient.³⁵ This was an additional reason for Matton to propose that Russia should be pushed to start the war.

Moulin, the French military attaché, had very good sources of information in the Russian military establishment. He reported that the mobilized strength of the Russian army amounted to nearly three and a half million, with 1 284 000 men in the active troops and 770 000 men in the reserve detachments. The first-line troops amounted to 48 infantry divisions and 28 reserve divisions in Europe.³⁶

³⁵ Mission . . . = 30

³⁶ "L'effectif normal de l'armée russe", by Moulin.

active troops	898 infantry battalions
1,284,000 men	356 cavalry squadrons
	340 artillery batteries
	17 sapper battalions
	8 pontoon battalions
	6 railway battalions
	18 fortress artillery battalions
	6 gendarme squadrons
	28 frontier guard brigades
reserve troops	430 infantry battalions, I call-up
770,000 men	248 infantry battalions, II call-up
	152 artillery batteries
	20 engineer companies
	3 railway battalions
depot troops	200 battalions
255,000 men	

How these forces were to be deployed was explained by Obručev to Boisdeffre during their discussion in 1891. Obručev expected an attack by four German active corps and two reserve corps from East Prussia towards the Niemen and Vilna with the objective of confusing the Russian mobilization and preventing the Petersburg troops from arriving in Poland. Three more corps were expected to come from Posen to engage Gurko in Poland. The Austrians were at this time probably directing five corps from Cracow towards Warsaw, five corps from Przemysl and three or four corps from Lemberg to the north-east. Thus there would be 900 000 men attacking Poland, but Obručev expected Gurko to be able to stem them with his 300 000 men supported by the Vistula fortresses until he was strengthened by the Moscow and Petersburg garrisons. The Niemen or northern army would confuse the German mobilization by cavalry attacks and defend the Niemen line, thus enabling the transport of the Petersburg troops towards Poland to take place. Dragomirov with his southern army would attack the Austrian communications in order to check their offensive. After collecting all his forces and stopping the enemy advances on his flanks Gurko could start his offensive against Breslau and Berlin.³⁷

By the end of 1891 the right flank, the Niemen army, had been somewhat strengthened. It had the task of invading East Prussia in order to align with Gurko's front and thereby to eliminate the threat against his right flank. This direction was

³⁶ Continued

local troops	30 fortress infantry regiments
235,000 men	53 fortress artillery batteries
	10 fortress artillery companies
	16 sortie batteries
Cossack troops	877 sotnias
included in active	40 batteries
and reserve	20.5 battalions
effectives	
militia troops	320 battalions, I call-up
660,000 men	320 battalions, II call-up

Troops in Caucasia

70,000 men

Troops in Asia

65,000 men

"Mobilisation 1892", EMATSH 7 N 1508

³⁷ Boisdeffre to war minister 10.VIII 1892. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 31. DDF IX/1 n:o 447

deemed the most dangerous for the main army, and consequently it was felt to be the most probable direction of German attack.

But in spite of the acknowledged need to reinforce the northern flank, the Russian general staff did not renounce their plan of an offensive against Austria. They considered that until the Austrian army had been chased behind the Carpathians, it was impossible to expose Gurko's left flank to them by an attack towards Posen, or to leave them behind the Russian back if Gurko's front was turned northwards to the Narew. Southern Poland had no natural barriers, and no first-class fortresses excepting Ivangorod, and therefore it was impossible to leave the Austrians the chance of a victory which would let them to the communications of the Russian army. The Russian general staff also calculated that defensive action against the Austrians needed as many troops as offensive action, and offered less advantage. The defeat of the Austrian army and the evacuation by them of Galicia remained the inevitable prelude to any invasion of Germany.³⁸

The following year the plan of an offensive against Austria emerged even more clearly when the main army was divided into two groups. The army of the Vistula stood against the Germans with six army corps. The southern army of the Bug faced south-west, i.e. faced the Austrians, with three corps.³⁹

The French were somewhat doubtful of the chances of a Russian success. They calculated that the southern offensive against the Austrians could not start before the thirty-fifth day, when the Austrians advancing from Przemysl would have already thrown the Russians back towards Brest.⁴⁰ But they were not able to make Obručev change his plans.

The four armies can be marked out on the map (map 6) given to General Boisdeffre during the discussions on the military convention. This compares rather well with the map (map 7) drawn by Zaiončkovski.

The Numerical Strength of Russian Armies in 1891

1. Warsaw military district	Army of the Vistula	249 000
	Army of the Bug	160 000

³⁸ Moulin to war minister 28.X 1891. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 30

³⁹ Moulin to war minister 8.III 1892. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 30

⁴⁰ "Historique de la concentration russe 1882—1902". EMATSH 7 N 1509

698 000 men	reserve	123 000
	garrisons	156 000
2. Vilna military district	Army of the Niemen	268 000
	Detachment of	
458 000 men	Belostok	98 000
	reserve	60 000
	garrisons	32 000
3. Kiev military district	South-W. army	409 000
467 000 men	reserve	58 000
4. Odessa military district	Bessarabian corps	54 000
	Crimean corps	28 000
100 000 men	Chersonesian corps	18 000
1723 000 men in all		
The Baltic coast detachment		60 000
Amur military district		27 395
Omsk military district		4 222
Irkutsk military district		3 390
Turkestan detachments		28 582
Transcaspian detachments		11 029
Caucasian detachments		85 880

Instead of the earlier general reserve, each army now had a reserve of its own. The detachments in Asia could not be transferred to the west because the Asian borders and recent areas conquered were not entirely pacified.⁴¹

A new army corps, the 18th, was organized in Estonia in 1893,⁴² and the 19th in 1895 in Poland.⁴³ Two more had been planned⁴⁴ but their formation was adjourned to 1898 (the 20th in the Vilna district) and *ad calendas graecas*⁴⁵ (but the latter, the 21st in the Kiev district, was organized by the time the Japanese war broke out). The attached map (map 8) shows the distribution of the army corps in the empire at this time.

The general idea of the troop concentration plan remained constant, but there seem to have been notable changes of detail in the annual revisions of the plan. Plan n:o 16 in 1896 mentioned the following points for the concentration of the several army corps:

⁴¹ "Effectifs des armées russes en cas de guerre avec l'Allemagne et l'Autriche", Moulin 17.III 1892. EMATSH 7 N 1472

"Effectifs de l'armée russe au Caucase et en Asie". Moulin 2.V 1891. EMATSH 7 N 1472

⁴² Moulin to war minister 5.III 1893. EMATSH 7 N 1473

⁴³ "Formation d'un XIX corps d'armée russe". Moulin 12.XII 1894. EMATSH 7 N 1480

⁴⁴ Moulin to war minister 20.VI 1894. EMATSH 7 N 1473

⁴⁵ Moulin to war minister 12.V 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474

III army corps	Vilkovički
II	Suwalki
I	Olita
XVIII	Grodno
IV	Belostok
XVI	Belostok
V	Novo-Aleksandrovsk — Sedlec
VI	Lomža
Guards	Sedlec — Belsk
XI	Luck
X	Dubno
IX	Proskurov
XII	Kamenno-Polock
VII	Sevastopol
VIII	Odessa — Kišinev

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Next year the distribution of army corps in the various armies was given as follows:

The Niemen army	II, III, IV, I
The Vistula army	V, XV, XVI, VI, XVIII
The Bug army	XIV, XIX, Grenadiers
South-W. army	VI, XVII, XII, IX, X
expeditionary corps	VII
Bessarabian corps	

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The thirteenth army corps and the Guards corps are not mentioned in the second list, while the Grenadiers are left out of the first one. The Bessarabian corps must be the eighth from Odessa. Moulin writes: "The document covers only the military districts of Vilna, Warsaw, and Kiev and does not contain any information on the defence of the Baltic coast either in Finland or in the military district of St. Petersburg, but I trust that the *deuxième bureau* is able to make an approximate reconstruction of those measures".⁴⁶ For us the reconstruction is a bit problematic, because not many active troops were left in the district of the capital if the first, eighteenth and the Guards corps were transported to the frontier. There remained the eight Finnish and eight Russian rifle battalions in Finland.

⁴⁶ "Points de concentration du corps d'armée actifs". Moulin 2.VII 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁴⁷ Moulin to war minister 29.III 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁴⁸ = 47

But of course reserve, local, and fortress troops were available.

Maps 9 and 10 give the concentration areas of the armies in 1896 and 1897. And here the lost corps are found, the Guards near Warsaw and the thirteenth in the Bug army. The other St. Petersburg corps, first and eighteenth, can be seen forming a centre of gravity on the right flank or behind the main army. — In the 1897 plan the cavalry was grouped together in two cavalry corps, but it seems that no such corps were organized in practice.

As far as the French agents knew, the troops in Poland were to defend their positions at the beginning of the war against the Triple Alliance. Only the forces of the Kiev military district, the South-Western army, were to take the offensive. The plan was to have them mobilized on the sixth day and in position on the seventeenth day.⁴⁹

Thus there was no improvement from the French point of view:

“It is from the day when the Russian general staff disposes on the left bank of the Vistula of sufficient force to menace the valley of the Oder that Russia will be able to play a serious part against the Triple Alliance. All other combinations are but half measures and leave her ally in a situation that is full of dangers. If the general staff has not understood this simple concept, it is to be attributed to their policy of extreme appeasement towards Germany, a policy which seems odd in the light of the energy with which Germany reinforces garrisons in Alsace-Lorraine and East Prussia”.⁵⁰

There had been, in short, no improvement since the military convention had been signed. On the contrary, Russia was approaching Germany because the Kaiser supported Russia's eastern policy. For a moment, in the years 1895—1897, Russia had her attention turned to the Near East. After that she became even more absorbed in the Far Eastern schemes.

⁴⁹ “Notes sur la mobilisation de l'armée Russe”. Rapport sur les travaux au 2^e bureau de l'état-major de l'armée, par le capitaine Niessel, stagiaire à l'état-major de l'armée 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1484

⁵⁰ Moulin to war minister 12.VI 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474

3. Distractions

3.1. The Near East 1895—1897

Russia had aspired to the possession of the Turkish Straits since the days of Peter and Catherine. She had also learned that the way to the Straits went through the Balkans, where the Orthodox and Slav population demanded Russian protection — at least so the Russians imagined. But experience had also taught the Russians that other powers did not very much care for the idea of Russian Straits. France, England, and Austria had schemes of their own regarding the division of the inheritance of the sick man of Europe. That was why Russia preferred maintaining Turkey as the guardian of the Straits. She was weak enough to respond to a certain degree of Russian influence. And later on might dawn the day when Russia would be strong enough to fulfil her historic mission, the conquest of Constantinople, the *Tsargrad*. The conquest had been in Russia's programme, but nothing had been done so far to disturb the precarious status quo (since 1878).

But then an Armenian mob rebelled in Constantinople in 1895, probably in a futile attempt to provoke the great powers to favour an autonomous or independent Armenia. The Bulgarian massacres of 1875 served as a model. There was the possibility of a British fleet arriving in Constantinople to keep order for the Sultan. The Russian ambassador was afraid of England settling in the Straits and thus making an end of the Russian dreams once and for all. He asked the St. Petersburg government for authority to call up the Black Sea fleet at the first sign of the British approach.

Preparations were started, troops mobilized and concentrated in Odessa and Sevastopol. The military attaché did not identify the troops, but there were enough of them to form an army corps. A landing beach was chosen near the Bosphorus, on the European side. (map 11)

But the mobilization of the Black Sea fleet at Odessa and Sevastopol was an arduous affair. The navy was found to be in a bad condition for serious action, which was aggravated by the inexperience of the additional officers and sailors sent over from the Baltic fleet to the Black Sea. There were also fewer transport ships than expected. Only four of the ships of the volunteer fleet were equipped for transporting horses and heavy material; the rest were not very useful. Only one division could be carried at one time.

The passage was calculated to take ten days if there was no fog or tempest. But by the end of December 1895, when the call for action was expected daily, the time for good weather had already passed.⁵¹

The Caucasian troops were put in a state of readiness. The thirty-ninth division on the Armenian border was mobilized.⁵²

Moulin calculated that because of the eventual opposition of England, Italy, and some other powers, the Russian operation was possible only with Turkish consent. He supposed that a naval Russo-Turkish convention might exist for a joint defence of the Tshadaldsha line; he assumed the Turks would keep Constantinople under control, while the Russians closed the Bosphorus.⁵³ — As far as is known, no such convention existed. But a Russian general, Čičaev, inspected the Turkish defences at the Dardanelles. He had to conclude that they were good for nothing. The works were in a bad condition, there were not enough cannons to cover the passages, and there was a complete lack of organization. The officers charged with the defence were incapable, in particular the personnel of the mine defences was totally incompetent. He estimated that a British fleet would be able to force the passages, probably with losses, but not big enough to deter it.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Moulin to war minister 23.XII 1895. EMATSH 7 N 1473

⁵² "Préparatifs militaires de Russie". Moulin 26.XI 1895. EMATSH 7 N 1480

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⁵⁴ "L'expédition des Russes sur mer Noire". Moulin 2.XI 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474

The Dual Alliance did not work well in this instance. France was asked for support and help, being the nation *amie et alliée*. Paris answered that Russia could trust France if the problem was to maintain the status quo in the Straits, as had been agreed in 1856. In case of a peaceful partition of Turkey mutual support was promised: France was interested in Egypt, Suez and Syria. But war must be avoided.

''Only a grand national question, like a revision of the peace of Frankfurt, could justify a war in the eyes of the French people''.⁵⁵

Thus France gave no encouragement to the planned coup, in spite of a Russian hint of support for an eventual reconquest of the lost provinces.⁵⁶

There was also opposition to the expedition in the higher echelons of the Russian army, who saw it as a harmful diversion. Dragomirov, the commander in Kiev, and Puzerevskii, the chief of staff in Warsaw, were among those known to oppose the coup. They considered the idea of an invasion of Turkey most regrettable, because it presented great difficulties in execution, and would probably lead to a general war, under unfavourable conditions for Russia.⁵⁷

Then in 1897 the Cretan question led to a war between Greece and Turkey. Once more the dissolution of the Sultan's empire seemed to be nigh. Again Russia had to prepare for an intervention, ''a great activity reigns at present in Sevastopol''.⁵⁸

British influence was suspected of being behind the Cretan disorders. England was thought to be scheming for a naval base in Suda bay, whence a fleet could easily close the approaches to the Straits.

These suspicions gave a renewed impetus to the Russian preparations. A landing force was prepared for the invasion of the Bosphorus. This time the seventh corps in Sevastopol was earmarked for the operation. (Plan n:o 16, mentioned on page

⁵⁵ ''Pourparlers secrets décembre 1895—février 1896. Note secrète pour le ministre''. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 32

⁵⁶ ''Note secrète pour le ministre'' 2.X 1896. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 32

⁵⁷ ''Au sujet de l'opinion de deux généraux russes sur le projet de descente au Turquie''. Moulin 15.XII 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁵⁸ Report by the French consul at Odessa 10.II 1897 to military attaché to war minister. EMATSH 7 N 1474

38. Map 11 gives a detailed picture of the corps.). The few Russian ships in the Mediterranean were supposed to support the break-through from Saros Island.⁵⁹ — The report does not explain how they would have eliminated the British Mediterranean fleet. The most effective weapon against England was supposed to be pressure from the Russian Central Asian possessions against the Afghan and Indian borders. These plans will be explained later.

Italy was also known to be scheming for influence in the western Balkans, in Montenegro and Serbia. They might have supported the British in the attempt to take Gallipoli.⁶⁰ An especially keen rival was Austria, of course. She was known to have ambitions on Salonica. But it was hoped that Sofia, Athens, and Belgrade would be able to check these ambitions, if not engaged by the Balkan Muslims and the Turks. The conciliation with Bulgaria since 1894 had been a great step forward for Russia. The general staff was able to count on Bulgarian support for the realization of its plans; and the Bulgarian army was developing promisingly.⁶¹

These views of the situation seem somewhat rosy — Italian and Austrian opposition was played down on the strength of Balkan help against them. It causes no surprise to learn that in St. Petersburg Witte was reported to be very much against the projected adventure. On the other hand, influential Pan-Slavists ardently desired the Straits and they were rumoured to be working up the Bulgarians and the Macedonians to force the Russian government to act.⁶²

Happily, for the Russian government, Turkey showed a surprising vitality. The Sultan's troops beat the Greek regiments. Thus the Straits problem could be adjourned. Turkish vitality was also reflected in the attitude of the Balkan populations:

"The attitude of Bulgaria and Serbia is resolutely pacific. The military vigour of which Turkey has recently given proof is an important factor in this resolution"⁶³

⁵⁹ Moulin to navy minister 29.I 1897. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 32

⁶⁰ Moulin to war minister 23.I 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁶¹ Moulin to war minister 5.II 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁶² Moulin to war minister 5.III 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁶³ Moulin to war minister 13.IV 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474

Austria, too, had her reasons for wishing to preserve the status quo in the Balkans. The Dual Monarchy was preoccupied with the difficulties caused by the quarrelling nationalities of the empire. If there was no immediate danger of the Turkish empire dissolving, Austria and Russia would be able to agree on leaving it alone for the present, in spite of their fundamental rivalry. It was hoped that the Sultan would carry out some reforms in Macedonia to mollify the population, whose dissatisfaction was endangering the peace there.

No more military or naval preparations were needed:

”For the moment the Russian general staff has no intention of taking any precautionary measures which might arouse Austrian susceptibilities . . .”⁶⁴

When the notorious Pan-Slavist Ignat’ev was appointed ambassador in Constantinople, he explained that the question of the Turkish Straits must always remain a prime one for Russia. But for the moment she had too many interests to safeguard, too much new territory to reorganize, too many internal problems to solve, too many projects in Central Asia and on the frontiers of China, to have any other aim but to maintain the status quo in the Near East.⁶⁵

Thus the Near Eastern question was not abandoned, but it was frozen for the duration of Russia’s grand adventure on the distant Asian frontiers.

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The Turkish victory over the Greeks called forth an Islamic revival in the Asian regions that were inhabited by the Mussulmans, in the Turkish as well as in the Russian or English possessions.

”In the Asian bazaars they talk only of the splendid triumphs of the Turks”.⁶⁶

This was ominous for the colonial empires, but the pan-Islamic or pan-Turkish menace took its time to materialize. The general staffs of the European nations had to bear in mind,

⁶⁴ Moulin to war minister 29.IV 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁶⁵ Rouvier, envoy in Stockholm, to MAE 15.VII 1897. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S.
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⁶⁶ ”Reveil de l’islamique en Asie”. Moulin 12.XII 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1506

however, that their Musulman subjects were not to be trusted completely.

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In 1900 the fleet and army in Sevastopol were again mobilized with the aim of preparing an expedition to the Bosphorus. Probably this was not intended to issue in an actual departure to the Straits. The preparations already undertaken in 1896 had been kept up and incorporated in the military organization of the Black Sea region. Now the general staff wanted to see whether they functioned well. Moulin, when reporting on this, also supposed that the intention was to remind the Turks of the respect due to their Russian neighbour.⁶⁷

But three years later the Sevastopol and Odessa troops were again made ready for the expedition. The volunteer fleet was also assembled and trained for the ferrying of the expeditionary corps. "The preparations are not concealed, but there is no indication of a general mobilization".⁶⁸ This time there was a material reason for the preparations. In the spring of 1903 the peace of the Balkans was again disturbed by the Macedonian quarrels. European opinion demanded reforms; to avoid England meddling in their sphere of interest Austria and Russia drew up a programme for the Sultan. As previously, they both wished to preserve the status quo. Happily for them, the Sultan accepted the program. But there still remained the danger of him delaying the execution of his promises and consequently of a Bulgarian or other intervention.

Therefore Russia had to prepare for an intervention of her own, on the previous model. This time more detail was given on the action planned in Caucasia. Two army corps had been organized there. They were to be mobilized in twelve days and concentrated in Kars in sixteen days. They would consist of 110 000 infantrymen and 25 000 cavalry. The Turks needed more than a month to collect their army on the Caucasian border. Thus the Russians would be able to advance into Armenia. But there a Turkish army of equal strength — 125 000 men — would be waiting for them. Thus no decisive

⁶⁷ "Exercice de mobilisation à Sebastopol". Moulin 10.III 1900. EMATSH 7 N 1476

⁶⁸ Moulin to war minister 6.III 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1476

results could be expected from the Caucasian theatre.

The Black Sea fleet consisted of 8 battleships, 2 coastal armoured ships, 3 protected cruisers, 6 gunboats, 3 torpedo cruisers and 32 torpedo boats. There were 5 naval transports and 17 ships of the volunteer fleet. The Russian Navigation Company had 20 ships, but at any time half of its ships were in service in Palestine, Alexandria, and the Far East. Thus there were 32 ships available, capable of transporting 30 000 men with 4—5 artillery batteries at one time.

Odessa military district had prepared the seventh and eighth army corps for transshipment. But only one corps could be embarked at one time, on the eleventh day. The rest of the troops could follow later, or march through Romania.

For the expected action there were a few alternative plans. Russia might try to break through the Bosphorus and to occupy Constantinople. The breakthrough was possible because of the state of the defence works on the Bosphorus. But there were 25 000 men of the Sultan's guard in the capital, and 90 000 more men could be mobilized by the tenth day in Asia Minor. And the English fleet could cause serious difficulties for the expedition.

A landing between Burgas and Constantinople was also possible. The seventh corps would be able to execute it on the twelfth day. Turkey would be able to mobilize 35 000—100 000 men in Thrace between twelve to sixty days, and thus the Turkish corps in front of the seventh corps would be a superior force, constituting 38 000 men by the twelfth day. But a Russian landing could be massively supported by the Bulgarian army. The latter would have 120 battalions or 120 000 men mobilized and concentrated on the Thracian frontier, in addition to the 24 battalions helping the rebellion in Macedonia. These 120 battalions would advance from the valley of Maritza against the Turkish flank.

A landing further to the north, between Burgas and Varna, would be easy, on the eleventh day. But there the Russians would be only an additional corps to the Bulgarian army facing the Turkish border. The eighth army corps of 80 000 men would need three transports of four days each. Thus it would not be until the twenty-third day that the Russians would have their 110 000 men concentrated. Then, with the Bulgarians they would add up to an army of 250 000 men. By the twenty-

third day the Turks would be able to have only 50 000 men concentrated.

A march through Romania would bring the eighth corps to the theatre of war on the thirty-seventh day, on condition that Romania and Europe consented to it.

The problematic breakthrough at the Bosphorus and the landing of the seventh corps might lead to some results if the action was supported by the eighth corps in Thrace. (Evidently, the eighth corps was to prevent the Turks from concentrating against the landing corps).

In Macedonia Turkey had 110 000 men. They could be mobilized between ten to twelve days. They would then be engaged in fighting the Macedonian rebels and the 24 Bulgarian battalions, starting from the twelfth day. The rebellion would be supported also by Montenegro, who was able to mobilize 20 000 men instantaneously and to concentrate them on the Albanian border by the fifth or sixth day. Serbian and Greek action could be ignored. Serbia was able to mobilize and concentrate 80 000 men in three weeks, but preparations for an offensive would take another three weeks. Greece had 2—3 divisions, i.e. 20 000—25 000 men, but their mobilization had not been prepared. Consequently a great confusion would follow from a declaration of a war. Thus the Greeks were not able effectively to help any of the belligerents.⁶⁹

Then, after all, there was no great revolt in Macedonia, and consequently no Russian intervention. The calculations outlined above remained only as an example of staff paper work. In the French report it was not indicated how much of the projected plan was based on actual Russian information, and how much was conjecture by the military attaché and the general staff in Paris. But the plan illustrates the general tendency of the general staffs to expect the decision of a campaign in one great battle at the very beginning and the consequent importance of speed in troop mobilization and concentration. — No thought was given to an intervention by any other great power, excepting the possible action of the British fleet.

⁶⁹ "Note au sujet d'une intervention armée éventuelle de la Russie et des Etats balkaniques dans les affaires macédonniennes". Etat-major de l'armée, avril 1903. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 36, p. 197—

Russia and Austria succeeded in renewing their agreement on the Balkan status quo in 1903. Thus Russia was able to pursue her distractions elsewhere, for a while.

3.2. New Commanders

There was no age limit for Russian generals. One of the cardinal weak points of the Russian army was the high age of the commanders. For instance, the minister of war Vannovskii was enfeebled and was deemed to be "only a machine for signing papers". (But he was not too old to be appointed minister of education after he left the war ministry). General Obručev was also very feeble and his faculties were badly diminished. In Poland the successor of the late Gurko, count Šuvalov, was not satisfactory either in health or ability. In Kiev Dragomirov had begun to sink visibly. Mussin-Puškin in Odessa was a drunkard whose character had softened. Čeremetev in Caucasia was in deplorable health and incapable of war-time command.⁷⁰ — This unadorned list was drawn up by Moulin in 1896, probably inspired by younger generals who aspired to replace the old crew.

One of the measures which the Soviet historians call counter-reforms was the planned remodelling of the army command after the German model. The war minister was to answer only for administration, while a general inspector of the army — Dragomirov's name was mentioned — was to take care of training. Operational questions were to be dealt with by the chief of the general staff — Obručev, Kuropatkin, Puzerevskii, and Bobrikov were among the candidates — immediately subordinate to the emperor. This system would have emphasized the position of the emperor as the supreme war-lord, if he had been the man for such a task, which Nicholas II evidently was not. The system had worked to some extent under an amateur military emperor like Alexander I, but the

⁷⁰ Moulin to war minister 15.I 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474

confusion it caused was one of the reasons for the disaster of 1853—1856. The system did not work very well in Germany, either, where William II was unable to direct the various conflicting chancelleries, ministries, and staffs. One of Miljutin's principal reforms had been to unite all command in the war ministry. Now a supreme committee was appointed to ponder a counter-reform,⁷¹ but its execution was postponed until after the Russo-Japanese war.

Now, in 1898, Kuropatkin was appointed Vannovskii's successor with full authority over the military establishment (excepting the unofficial military cabinet led by the minister of court, who was influential in questions of appointment and promotion). Out of a curious sense of consideration the post had been first offered to Obručev. But the old man, although flattered, had been too modest (and sensible) to accept it.⁷² The French were happy about the nomination of Kuropatkin. He was received with enthusiasm by the Russian army, press, and political opinion. He was a convinced Russian patriot of the Pan-Slavist coloration, happy about the Franco-Russian alliance, and, after his long service in Central Asia, was a definite Anglophobe. His chief of general staff Saharov was also deemed industrious and of great intelligence.⁷³

There was much to do for the new men in the war ministry. There was the problem of re-equipping the artillery, there was the menace of a conflict in Central Asia and in the Far East, and the danger of complications in Central Europe.

"General Kuropatkin continues working with a Napoleonic activity. Every day he gives audiences until late in the night. The ministry has completely been awakened from its previous torpor".⁷⁴

One man whose name had been mentioned in connection with several vacancies was Bobrikov of the Petersburg military district,

⁷¹ Moulin to war minister 30.I 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474

⁷² Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE to war ministry 28.I 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

⁷³ "Sur le nouveau ministre de la guerre et le nouveau chef de l'état-major". Moulin 16.I 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

⁷⁴ Moulin to war minister 10.IV 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

"the most capable chief of staff of the whole army; it is regrettable that his health is undermined by excessive work".⁷⁵

The vacancy of governor-general of the Amur military district had arisen, and Bobrikov's name had been mentioned. But he would also have been a good man in Mussin-Puškin's stead in Odessa.⁷⁶ Then there had been talk of his remaining in St. Petersburg with the title of adjunct to Grand Duke Vladimir, i.e. de facto commander of the military district.⁷⁷ He had also been proposed for the vacant appointment of chief of the general staff.⁷⁸

Bobrikov's ultimate appointment as governor-general of Finland indicates the importance which was accorded to the military and constitutional reform in Finland. Bobrikov was to integrate the military establishment of Finland into the Russian army and to eliminate Finnish separatism and constitutionalism, which was seen to be a danger to the security and uniformity of the empire.

3.3. Rearmament and Disarmament

A Polish economist, the president of the chamber of commerce in Warsaw, I.M. Bloch, saw the future in dismal colours. His home city was in the middle of the future battlefield and was certainly to suffer the fate of Paris in 1870—1871. Therefore he caused a committee to be established to ensure supplies for the Polish capital in case of a siege.

This led Bloch to study further the economic problems of modern war. It was obvious to him that in the event of a great conflict all people would hide their gold, and nobody would be able to recover their outstanding debts; the lack of money

⁷⁵ Moulin to war minister 9.VI 1887. EMATSH 7 N 1471

⁷⁶ "Au sujet de nominations divers". Moulin 16.I 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

⁷⁷ "Nominations dans l'armée". Moulin 10.II 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

⁷⁸ Moulin to war minister 30.I 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474

would create financial chaos. But there was no indication of the existence of a plan for a war economy in any European country.

An even more menacing danger was the interruption of maritime commerce. International law did not secure such commerce from plunder and destruction; the naval war would be waged mercilessly by the privateers. The consuming nations would be left starving, while Russia and Austria would be unable to export. America, Australia, and India could export only at prohibitive insurance costs. No stores could be stocked in peacetime because of the excessive costs of such measures. Consequently there would arise a threat of famine for the labouring classes. Socialism was already rampant in Germany, and if the war was prolonged, occurrences like the Paris Commune were to be expected. And these occurrences would threaten victors as well as vanquished. Hence Bloch hoped that the danger of popular movements would make war impossible.⁷⁹

Bloch's subsequent detailed study on "The Future War"⁸⁰ was an important and famous milestone in the progress of the antiwar movement. But these ideas of "socialists, Jews, and hysterical women" were not taken seriously by general staffs and others responsible for the preparation for war. They foresaw only a short war with one decisive battle during the first weeks. Consequently no planning or preparation for a long war was deemed necessary, nor were its consequences to be apprehended.

But it is well known that the Emperor Nicholas, who was a good man, even if a bad emperor, was impressed by Bloch's book. He endorsed the author's ideas and, surprisingly, made his ministers adopt them. Murav'ev, the minister for foreign affairs, sent a circular to the principal powers and proposed a conference for disarmament.

Moulin hastened to save the honour of the Russian statesmen. Of course they were not taken in by the idealism of their sovereign. But Kuropatkin had started planning the rearming of his artillery with modern cannons; and Witte had

⁷⁹ A report on Bloch's lecture, war ministry to MAE 24.IV 1893. EMATSH 7 N 1480

⁸⁰ I.S. Blioh. *Budušćaja voĭna v tehničeskom, ekonomičeskom i diplomatičeskom otnošenijah I—VI*, S. Petersburg 1898

been horrified at the costs, especially of heavy artillery. Therefore Witte and other ministers had greeted the emperor's proposal with enthusiasm. Russia would be spared immense costs if other powers could be made to give up their lead in military technology. Saharov, the chief of the general staff, also calculated that if part of the credits used for maintaining large numbers of men under arms could be redirected for building strategic railway lines, Russia's offensive power would essentially grow.⁸¹ Thus there was no reason for France to suspect that her ally had forsaken her.

The suspicion had been virulent. France had not received any advance information about Murav'ev's circular. The move seemed to be a scheme against France, and one suggested by the German emperor⁸² who was known for his attempts to influence his cousin Nicholas. Publicly the initiative of the ally was lauded: "the grand conception cannot help making a profound impression on the whole world".⁸³ But private reservations were voiced by the French press: "the new proof of the emperor's chivalrous character"⁸⁴ was only a "beautiful dream"⁸⁵ which, if realized, would endanger France's vital interests. The alliance had made possible the hope of some day regaining the lost provinces, but the proposed disarmament implied giving up *revanche*. The proposal was thus a piece of Russian perfidy, if not a blind acceptance of a suggestion by William II.⁸⁶ The Germans were seen rejoicing because the cool reception of Russia's proposal in Paris was causing a chasm between the two allies.⁸⁷ Also *The Times* wrote with malice: "Until the question (of Alsace and Lorraine) is settled she (France) cannot even consent to diminish her military burden. So she will stand alone in her inability to adhere to the plans

⁸¹ "Au sujet de la circulaire du Comte Mouravieff". Moulin 8.IX 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

⁸² Delcassé to the ambassador in St. Petersburg 27.VIII 1898. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16

⁸³ Montebello, ambassador in St. Petersburg to Delcassé 24.VIII 1898. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16

⁸⁴ *Le Petit Journal* 29.VIII 1898 (a collection of newspaper cuttings in AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16, p. 126—)

⁸⁵ *Le Matin* 29.VIII 1898

⁸⁶ *Le petit bleu* 29.VIII 1898

⁸⁷ Ambassador in Berlin to MAE 31.VIII 1898. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16, p. 239

of ally and friend . . . ”⁸⁸

In fact, France was not alone. Denmark did not wish for disarmament, because she did not want to give up her revanche, the lost provinces of Slesvig and Holstein.⁸⁹ Serbia promised to be the foremost advocate of peace and disarmament “if only the tribune of Europe will give us what belongs to us . . . Long live the unity of the Serb nation!”⁹⁰ The Italians declared that a nation was able to live free only on the condition of having a strong army prepared for any eventuality. Some papers named names without any adornment: they wanted Trieste and Trentino as a precondition for any disarmament.⁹¹ The Americans remarked that the army was no burden for them, while their navy could not, “of course”, be diminished.⁹² For many Germans disarmament was the very negation of their empire. The officer corps especially was worried lest the proposal was accepted because they had obtained substantial privileges since 1871. And who would teach the workers discipline and orderliness if not the army? Where could the Poles be made learn the German language if not in military service?⁹³

Thus, everybody wanted peace, but only on the condition that it secured their rightful aspirations and vital interests. Because the vital interests of the several nations were diametrically contradictory, and because they as sovereign powers were the sole arbiters of their interests, the precondition of a lasting peace was a great war. The vital interests were held to be national security, power, greatness, and honour. There was no attempt to redefine them.

Out of respect for its august sponsor the conference was held. It convened at the Hague in 1899, after it was ensured that the programme would not diminish national sovereignty, would not mean any giving up of interests, or any disarmament.

Of course, the Hague peace conference was not useless even

⁸⁸ *The Times* 31.VIII 1898

⁸⁹ French envoy in Copenhagen to MAE 1.IX 1898. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16 p. 239

⁹⁰ *Male novine* 1.IX 1898

⁹¹ Ambassador in Rome to MAE 15.IX 1898. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16 p. 320

⁹² Ambassador in Washington to MAE 12.IX 1898. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16 p. 309

⁹³ Ambassador in Berlin to MAE 3.IX 1898. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16

if there were no immediate results. The difficulties on the road to international understanding had to be mapped out as a necessary precondition for further attempts to overcome them.

The Franco-Russian alliance was able to live through this trial, because no arms were discarded. Hence the rejoicing of the German and English press proved premature. But this was not the sole trial for Franco-Russian relations.

3.4. A Central Asian Diversion against England

During the Near East crisis of 1897 British influence was suspected of being behind the Cretan disorders. There was nothing much that Russia could do against England in the Mediterranean. The only effective means of making the English hesitate was to menace their Indian frontiers. But at that time Russia had only about 15 000 men in Transcaspia and 30 000 men in Turkestan, half of whom only were free for action. The Transcaspian railway was able to carry only four trains a day. Thus the minimum army of 200 000 men needed against India was beyond Russia's capacity to assemble. The Russian general staff thus saw their Central Asian position not as a launching point for a serious attack on India, but only as a means of threatening the English any time they caused mischief in Constantinople or at the Straits. "That has been the policy of Skobelev, Černjaev, Kuropatkin, Komarov..." said Moulin's informant.⁹⁴

In 1898 the march of Major Marchand into an untenable military position in Fashoda involved France in a conflict with England. Delcassé had the greatest difficulties in disentangling his country from the embarrassing situation that arose because of Fashoda. He had a fleeting hope of being able to use the Shimonoseki coalition of 1895, France-Russia-Germany, to

⁹⁴ Moulin to war minister 3.IV 1897. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 33. DDF XIII/1, n:o 177

counter the unyielding English and save the untenable French position on the upper Nile. But Russia now paid back the French refusal to support her in Constantinople in 1895—97. Delcassé had to find a solution without Russian support.

Afterwards Kuropatkin tried to explain that Russia had done everything she could to help France and that she would have joined her ally if the incident had really ended in open conflict. As proof he pointed out the fact that Russia had mobilized her ports: Libau, Dünamünde, Kronstadt, the Black Sea ports, and, in the first instance, the Far Eastern ports. Two hundred guns had been placed in Vladivostok, and Port Arthur had received 279 guns. Ten million roubles had been spent and 12 000 men had been detached to Port Arthur, "excellent troops who would put up a defence comparable to that of Sevastopol". But naturally Russia had been cautious and guarded, not eager to sacrifice thousands of lives and millions of roubles, in her dire financial straits, only in order to save Fashoda for France.⁹⁵

Russian armaments in the Far Eastern ports were a cold comfort for France. Kuropatkin's statement is more important as an indication of the fact that Russia's interest was turning strongly to the East.

Russian pressure on the borders of British India might have been of more importance for France in her dilemma. Kuropatkin told Moulin that during the crisis of 1885 Vannovskiï had made him study the problem. He had then concluded that Russia was in no position to wage war with any chance of success in the direction of the Afghan-Indian frontiers. Of course Russia would have fought if compelled to, but it would have been at an enormous cost of money and men, with not much result from the laborious efforts involved. During the twelve years of Kuropatkin's governorship of Turkestan, the situation had nevertheless somewhat improved. The railway from the Caspian had reached Tashkent, the army in Turkestan had been reinforced, and more attention had been paid to the details of organization. But the British had more than compensated for this Russian progress. Thus Russia had been unable to undertake any serious demonstration of force during the Fashoda crisis; she had had to content herself with

⁹⁵ Moulin to war minister 30.I 1899. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 34. DDF XV/1, n:o 52

a strictly defensive attitude. At that moment (1899) measures were being accelerated and a plan of mobilization and troop concentration for Central Asia was being prepared. The railway which was being build from Merv to Kushka would make possible an attack in the direction of Herat. (Map 12.) But for a war against Afghanistan an army of 100 000 men would be needed, while an expedition towards India needed an army of 250 000 men. In the beginning of 1899, said Kuropatkin, the general staff had revised the number of troops in Asia.

Russian troops in Asia in 1899

Caucasian military district	320 000
Kazan military district	220 000
Siberian military districts	40 000
Turkestan and Transcaspia	75 000
Amur and Port Arthur	80 000
in all	735 000

Kuropatkin estimated that about 120 000 men could be used for operations after leaving about 200 000 men to guard against surprise moves by the Amir and the Sultan.

A serious defect was the absence of great units. Therefore he was going to organize new staffs for army corps: Transcaspian, Turkestan, and Southern Ussuri corps in addition to the second Caucasian corps.⁹⁶

In case of a war in Asia Kuropatkin planned to mobilize the following troops against the British:

Ist line	
Transcaspian army corps	2 infantry regiments
Kushka	1 reserve regiment
Turkestan army corps	1 Cossack brigade
Samarkand	3 infantry brigades
	1 artillery brigade
IIind line	
Caucasian army corps	1 Caucasian brigade
	1 native brigade
	1 reserve regiment
	1 cavalry brigade
	1 Caucasian grenadier division
XIII army corps	1st division
Vladikavkas	21st division
	36th division

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⁹⁶ Moulin to war minister 30.I 1899. = ⁹⁵

⁹⁷ "Plan de concentration contre les Anglo-Afghan en Asie". Moulin 16.IV 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

But the key problem was to get these men to the theatre of war. In three weeks 30 000—40 000 men could be concentrated on the Afghan border, and 75 000—80 000 men in forty days. A considerable time would be needed to assemble 200 000—250 000 men there. Therefore everything must be done to postpone a conflict with England. Only after the Transcaspian railway was connected with the railway network of the empire could an army of 300 000—400 000 men be concentrated on the Anglo-Russian frontiers in Asia. Then it would take two months.⁹⁸

From other sources Moulin knew that the Russian general staff planned to build a connecting link from Orenburg to Tashkent, and additional lines towards the frontier between Bukhara and Afghanistan. Financing the lines was problem, especially because of the quarrel with Witte, who wanted to connect the Transcaspian railway to his Siberian trunk line with a Tashkent-Tomsk railway.⁹⁹ This connection could be completed at the earliest in 1904.

Kuropatkin himself was interested in explaining the Russian weakness in Central Asia because the French were demanding action against the English there. Lieutenant Grilliers, an officer on a mission to Persia and the Russian empire, saw the Russian position in a more positive light. He thought that the conquest of the Middle East was for the Russians a question of only a few days. The local Russians had told him that the march to Khorasan in the east and Erzerum in the west was a manifest destiny for Russia. The first objective was Herat, from where the Persian Gulf could be reached in the south and Kandahar in the south-east.

"The realization of this programme in the near future is not doubted by the Russians . . . I have seen numerous reinforcements being sent to the Afghan frontier as well as evident preparations for the march on Herat . . ."

Secret preparation in Persia were also rumoured of. Russia

⁹⁸ "Conversation avec le Général Kouropatkine sur les conditions d'une guerre sur les confins Anglo-Russes en Asie". Moulin 19.I 1901. EMATSH 7 N 1476

⁹⁹ "Sur un projet de voie ferrée très-importante en Asie Centrale". Moulin 25.I 1899

could thus find an outlet to the sea through Merv-Herat-Bander Abbas, open the door to the riches of South-East Asia through Herat-Hindukush, take the keys of Euro-Asian commerce between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The Central Asian markets would be opened for her and denied to others. In this way Russia would grow into an all-powerful industrial, commercial, and military empire.¹⁰⁰

Another officer on a mission, Captain de la Taillie, reported that enormous efforts were being made and considerable troops were being concentrated and camps fortified a few kilometres from the border so that they could avail themselves of the first occasion to proceed at a lightning speed. This officer concluded that Russia was not going to attack India or Afghanistan, she was going to occupy the coasts of the Persian Gulf.

"It seems certain that the Caucasus and Turkestan will be the theatres of important events in the more or less near future".¹⁰¹

These are impressions gained from interviews with the local Russians who, as colonialists, were as eager as ever to push forward and to dream of carving up new empires. They are no proof of concrete plans for action. Kuropatkin in St. Petersburg judged the situation much more soberly; and of course the military alone were not able to decide the direction of Russian politics.

But the interviews are proof of the dreams that the Russians would have liked to realize had they been able to do so. They are also examples of the fashionable arguments of commercial and industrial advantage to be gained by imperialism. *Novoe Vremja* declared that if Persia was only a market for Russia, the invasion of British commercial and political influence in the southern parts of that country need not be very alarming. But Persia, in fact, played a more important role because of her geographical position. It was through her that Russia was going to penetrate to the Indian Ocean.¹⁰² Also the threat of

¹⁰⁰ "Rapport du Lieutenant Grilliers sur son voyage en Russie et Perse fait en 1899—1900". EMATSH 7 N 1484

¹⁰¹ "Rapport sur un voyage fait en Russie par le capitaine de la Taillie en Novembre et Decembre 1899". EMATSH 7 N 1484

¹⁰² *Novoe Vremja* 14.IV 1899. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 17

eventual German influence from the Baghdad railway worried the Russians.¹⁰³

The essential reason why these dreams were left unrealized and why Russia was content with the status quo in Central Asia — after her great conquests of the years 1860—1895 — was that her attention was turning to the Far East. She deemed herself unable to conquer Persia, either militarily or commercially. To prevent others from doing that, to preserve Persia for her own future use, she used her influence at the court of the Shah and compelled Persia to undertake an obligation not to build or to give concession to build railways in the country for two decades, 1890—1910. It was deemed that this prohibition would prevent the British from building railways from India to Mesopotamia, Syria and Arabia.

”The Russian general staff has no intention of occupying the Persian Gulf or of pushing railways to the coast, because it is impossible to face so many expenses at the same time . . . The Trans-Siberian and Manchurian railways are devouring enough money, as well as the building and fortifying of Port Arthur”.¹⁰⁴

At the beginning of 1900 Kuropatkin explained that Russia had no reason to take advantage of England’s difficulties (in South Africa). Afghanistan and India were too far away to be conquered. The Transcaspian railway made possible the defence of Central Asia, but for an offensive the connecting line with the Russian railways was necessary. But for a while Russia had enough to do in building her railways in Manchuria and in developing her Far Eastern possessions. He had studied the question of Constantinople, too, and hoped one day to see the realization of Russian hopes there. Sooner or later Russia had to obtain the keys of the Black Sea; but not yet.¹⁰⁵

Persia continued to be an irritant between England and Russia, in addition to more actual causes of dispute, until the entente of 1907, and even after that. In 1902 Moulin reported

¹⁰³ Moulin to war minister 25.IV 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

¹⁰⁴ ”Au sujet de la concession de chemins de fer en Perse”. Moulin 8.I 1900. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁰⁵ Ambassador on St. Petersburg to MAE 30.I 1900. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 17. DDF XVI/1, n:o 62

that the Russians were irritated by English attempts to infiltrate to the Persian Gulf and Persia itself, which the Russians considered a domaine of their old Asian policy. Russia needed an outlet on a warm sea, and a railway from Russia to the Gulf would make her the dominating influence in Persia,

”to the benefit not only of Russia but also and above all of Persia herself, considering the deplorable situation in this state, which is led by an incapable government”.¹⁰⁶

But Russia never had the leisure to attempt a definite domination of Persia.

3.5. Russian Strength at the Turn of the Century

By the turn of the century the peacetime strength of the Russian army was given by Moulin in his reports as 34 000 officers and 860 000 men, with 150 000 horses. There are differences between the reports, which may be due to the inclusion or exclusion of reserve and militia cadres and Asian units. Some variation must also be due to defects in compiling the statistics. Thus the numbers must be taken as giving only a general impression. The mobilization strength with 2.85 million reservists was 3700 000 men in 1899, and the total amount of trained soldiers, militia included, was 4.55 million men.¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰⁶ "l'Angleterre et la Russie en Perse". Moulin 1902. EMATSH 7 N 1506.

A useful study of great power imperialism in Persia is Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864—1914. A Study in Imperialism*. Yale Russian and East European Studies 6, Yale University Press 1968

¹⁰⁷ Effectives in Europe in November 1901

officers	34,000
men	860,000
horses	150,000

”Note sur les forces militaires de la Russie d’Europe, novembre 1901”. EMATSH 7 N 1506

army consisted of 959 battalions and 603 squadrons and sotnias with 357 field batteries and numerous mortar, depot, fortress and siege detachments, as well as various engineer formations.¹⁰⁸ The detachments were organized in 23 army corps of 2—3 divisions consisting of four regiments of four battalions each. There were twenty cavalry divisions of four regiments of six

¹⁰⁷ Continued

Effectives in October 1898

men	967,655
horses	160,414

"Effectifs au mois d'octobre dernier". Moulin 21.III 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

Trained reserves

1.I 1896	2,703,000 men
1.I 1897	2,753,072
1.I 1898	2,800,000
1.I 1899	2,850,000

"Sur les effectives de la réserve de recrutement". Moulin 21.III 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

Cossack troops

Cossacks of 19—41 years	426,453
fit for service	363,457
in active service	183,328
in active reserve	219,089

"Sur les troupes cosaques en 1897". Moulin 26.III 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

Total manpower

5 active classes, 21—25 years of age	1.3 million
13 reserve classes	2.85
militia, 39—43 years, trained	0.5
militia, 21—25 years, untrained	1.3
militia, II class, untrained	6
trained soldiers	4.55
mobilization strength	3.7

"Note sur les forces militaires . . ."

¹⁰⁸ Detachments in the peacetime army in 1901

Infantry	832 active battalions
959	45 fortress battalions
battalions	82 reserve battalions
Cavalry	542 squadrons and sotnias
603	61 depot squadrons
Artillery	357 field batteries
	40 horse batteries
	22 mortar batteries
	34 reserve batteries
	14 depot batteries
	195 fortress companies
	9 siege companies
	5 sortie batteries

squadrons each. There was one brigade of six batteries of field artillery for each division, and one sapper battalion for each army corps.¹⁰⁹

The peacetime effectives of the active troops were 100 % of the mobilization strength in the cavalry, 50 % in the infantry, and 80 % in the artillery. The mobilized strength of the active detachments was 30 000 officers and 1 118 000 men.

There were 183 328 Cossacks in the active service and more than 200 000 in the active reserve. They formed 53 active regiments and 148 regiments in all.

In addition to the Cossack Regiments the reserve consisted of 28 infantry divisions and 27 artillery brigades. Their peacetime cadres amounted to 13 % of the mobilization strength in the infantry and 20 % in the artillery.¹¹⁰ The fortress troops consisted of 15 % of wartime effectives in the infantry and 33 % in the artillery.¹¹¹

The mobilized strength of the Russian army in 1900

	officers	men	horses	guns
active troops	30 000	1 118 000	320 000	3258
reserve	22 000	585 000	143 000	166
fortress	3 800	213 000	2 000	
Turkestan	1 800	90 000	17 000	128
Siberia	850	51 000	4 500	64
Amur	1 600	80 000	20 000	148
Kwangtung	300	15 500	20 000	

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Kovno, Novo-Georgievsk, Warsaw, and Brest-Litovsk were first-class fortresses. Kronstadt, Sveaborg, Ivangorod,

¹⁰⁸ Continued

Engineers	23 sapper battalions
	8 pontoon battalions
	4 railway battalions
	2 reserve cadre battalions
	9 fortress sapper battalions
	7 mine companies
	2 river mine companies
	6 telegraph sections
	6 balloon sections
	7 pigeon sections

"Note sur les forces militaires de la Russie d'Europe, novembre 1901".
EMATSH 7 N 1506

¹⁰⁹ "Note . . ." = 108

¹¹⁰ "Note . . ." = 108

¹¹¹ "Note . . ." = 108

Vladivostok, Libau, Ossovec, and Sevastopol were given second-class status. There were numerous third-class fortresses and fortresses without class.¹¹³ European fortresses, if

¹¹² The Russian army in Asia in 1901

Turkestan 2 army corps

8 rifle brigades
 2 reserve infantry brigades 72 battalions
 1 Cossack division
 2 Cossack brigades 94 sotnias
 2 artillery brigades
 2 fortress artillery battalions
 7 engineer companies

Siberian garrisons

1 rifle battalion
 8 reserve battalions
 2 sotnias
 2 reserve batteries
 40 reserve battalions to be formed when mobilization occurred
 8 depot battalions —"—

The military district of the Amur

5 rifle brigades
 3 Cossack regiments
 2 artillery brigades
 1 artillery group
 2 artillery batteries 124 guns in all
 2 sapper battalions
 1 railway battalion
 4 reserve battalions
 7 fortress battalions
 9 fortress artillery companies
 4 fortress engineer companies
 60 battalions to be formed when mobilization occurred
 4 squadrons
 20 batteries

The peninsula of Kwangtung

1 rifle brigade
 1 Cossack regiment
 1 group of 3 batteries
 1 fortress infantry regiment
 2 fortress artillery battalions

"Note sur l'armée Russe II" s.d. EMATSH 7 N 1506

¹¹³ Classification of fortresses

1st class	Kovno, Novo-Georgievsk, Warsaw, Brest-Litovsk
2nd	Kronstadt, Sveaborg, Ivangorod, Vladivostok, Libau, Sevastopol, Ossovec
3rd	Vyborg, Ust-Dvinsk (= Dünamünde), Zegrze, Kerč, Očakov, Mihailovsk, Kushka
no class	Grodno, Dubno, Odessa, Bendery, Alexandrovo, Gerenig
Caucasia	Hunza, Georgievsk, Ahalcyh, Zakataly
Transcaspia	Krasnovodsk, Merv, Alexandrovsk

identified, are given on map 13.

The infantry was in the course of being equipped with the 7.62 mm magazine rifle. The cavalry had a carbine of identical calibre. The field artillery had guns of 86.8 or 106.7 mm, with eight cannons in each battery. The horse batteries had six guns of 86.8 mm. There were six mortars of 152.4 mm in each mortar battery. A quick-firing cannon of 76.2 mm was adopted in 1900, but the new guns were arriving very slowly in the batteries.¹¹⁴

3.6. The Military and Constitutional Reform in Finland

The Finnish troops consisted of 5009 infantrymen and 818 dragoons in active service. The permanent cadre of reserve consisted of 40 officers and 192 non-commissioned officers. There were 32 857 men in the reserve, who had served their time in the active battalions. In the militia there were 25 officers, 2329 non-commissioned officers and 75 074 men, trained in the reserve companies for three months. Thus the Grand Duchy was able to call to arms about 100 000 men in case of war. This was the situation at the moment of introducing the compulsory military service, said Moulin.¹¹⁵

Of course, Moulin meant the Russian law of military service, which came into force in 1901 to replace the Finnish law of 1878. The Finns were to serve on equal terms with other Russian subjects.

The Russian generals had not liked the separate Finnish army. For the Russian chauvinists it had been a repugnant

¹¹³ Continued
Turkestan

Taşkent, Hodžkent, Džarkent, Samarkand, Margelan,
Kerki, Čimkent, Perovski, Zaizanski

Far East Nikolaevsk, Poret, Port Arthur
"Note sur l'armée Russe II", EMATSH 7 N 1506

¹¹⁴ "Note sur les forces militaires de la Russie d'Europe, novembre 1901".
EMATSH 7 N 1506

¹¹⁵ "Composition des troupes finnois". Moulin 19.III 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

attribute of Finland's pretended autonomy. Pan-Slavist soldiers saw in it a potential danger, an armed ally of Germany or Sweden.

As early as 1886, inspecting the fortress of Vyborg and seeing its bad condition, Bobrikov had concluded that the essential military danger was the fact that the Finns had succeeded in expanding a provincial self-government into full political autonomy, with an army of their own under a separate command. This prevented the unified defence of the Baltic coast under the command of the St. Petersburg military district.

When appointed governor-general of Finland in 1898, Bobrikov, with Kuropatkin, Pobedonoscev, Plehwe, and other centralizers of the Russian state, sketched out the February Manifesto (15.II 1899) by Nicholas II. Military and other "all-imperial" questions were to be transferred from the Finnish Diet to the imperial instances.

The Russians thought that a provincial Diet had no call to decide questions of imperial defence. For the Finns this was a grave crime against the constitutional rights confirmed by the imperial oath of Alexander I, Nicholas I, Alexander II, Alexander III, and Nicholas II himself. The Finns had been the most stupidly loyal subjects in the whole empire, but this coup made an end of their loyalty. Then Russia really had reason to be worried about the security of her north-western confines.

Moulin continued his report concerning the precautions taken in case of disorder in Finland:

"Even though Finland is only a fly compared with the immense empire, and though the population is composed of heterogeneous elements — the town bourgeoisie and the aristocracy are Swedish, the people in the countryside are Finnish — which do not have identical tendencies, the Russian government believes it necessary to take precautionary measures in case the discontent provoked by the obligatory service should lead to local trouble. In order to be able immediately to suppress them with the greatest vigour and to prevent them from degenerating into disorder of a general character, the war ministry has made ready

a mixed division in St. Petersburg to assist the Russian troops positioned in the military district of Finland.

The division consisted of four Guards regiments, Moskovskii, Semenovskii, Pavlovskii, Finljandskii; one artillery brigade or 24 cannons and one battery of Guards horse artillery; and one calvary brigade.¹¹⁶

No mutiny compelled the Russian army to reconquer Finland, after all. But 60—40 % of the Finnish conscripts refused to enter the army (1902—1904) — many preferred emigrating to the USA. For the generals this was a clear proof of the unreliability of the Finns. They were temporarily freed from military service, like the wild Asiatic subjects of the empire, and made to pay an annual tax of ten million marks instead. All Finnish troops and military installations were abolished, even the Russian military district of Finland. Instead a new army corps, the twenty-second, was created. It consisted of two rifle brigades — the second brigade had been formed to replace the abolished Finnish battalions — and a dragoon regiment, an artillery brigade, and two Cossack sotnias policing Helsinki, the Finnish capital.

Bobrikov then concentrated on Russifying the Finnish administration until he was murdered in 1904 by Eugen Schauman, whose loyalty to Nicholas II could not suppress his aversion to Bobrikov's policy.

3.7. Kuropatkin's Plans for War in the West

Kuropatkin was a new man in the command of the Russian army. The French were at first a bit apprehensive regarding his ideas for the war plans against the Triple Alliance.

¹¹⁶ "Mesures de précaution contre l'éventualité de troubles en Finlande".
EMATSH 7 N 1475

The Russian general staff supposed that the Germans would have a strong concentration of troops in East Prussia. Consequently they kept their Narew army comparatively strong. Moulin had hoped that the Narew army would undertake an attack towards Thorn-Allenstein (as Samsonov later did in 1914) to ease the pressure on the French frontier, in spite of the menace of a flanking movement by the Germans in East Prussia. But the Russians seemed to be adopting a waiting, defensive attitude, until they had ascertained where the German troop concentration was in fact.¹¹⁷ They could not think about a direct attack from Warsaw towards Berlin. A strong peace-time concentration on the left bank of the Vistula in the western salient of Poland, in preparation for the attack, would certainly have provoked the Germans to counter-measures. And fortifying the bridgeheads, building barracks for the attack troops, and collecting all the necessary material would have given rise to prohibitive costs. Thus the upshot was that the French were not able to count on immediate and direct help from the east.

But there seemed to be emerging two schools of thought in the Russian general staff. Some officers thought that although Austria was numerically the stronger enemy (because the French would engage part of the German strength), a Russian victory over Germany would be morally decisive, because she was the core of the Triple Alliance and the foremost military power in the world. Even though part of the German forces would be fighting the French, a substantial part of them might be concentrated on the Narew front, whence they might try a breakthrough in the rear of the Russian troops operating against the Austrians. These officers wanted to have a strong defence on the Narew and on the Niemen. The troops of the Warsaw and Vilna districts were to be concentrated against East Prussia, with the St. Petersburg and Moscow troops in reserve. Only the troops of the Kiev district with a few Moscow units would be concentrated against the Austrians, whose operations had no decisive importance. Russia was to reduce East Prussia first, then beat the Austrians, and then attack towards Berlin.

¹¹⁷ "Sur l'elaboration d'un nouveau plan de concentration n:o 18". Moulin 28.XI 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

The French would probably have preferred this alternative. But another school of thought demanded against Austria the use of all troops that were not absolutely necessary for the defence against a German offensive. They thought that the result of their plan would be a victory over the Austrians. The enemy would be chased over the Carpathians, where the Russians would have an easy line of defence. Then the Russian offensive could be directed towards the Oder, and over the Oder towards Berlin. This school of thought calculated that the Russian army would be ready to start fighting on the twenty-fifth day, the victory over the Austrians would be secured by the thirtieth to thirty-fifth day, and the follow-up on the Oder could begin on the fortieth to forty-fifth day.¹¹⁸

It seems that the latter school of thought won. Kuropatkin and Saharov planned to concentrate 900 000 men on the German front and 785 000 men on the Austrian front, with 102 000 men keeping an eye on the Rumanians and 83 000 men preparing for the Bosphorus expedition. The 255 000 men on the Caucasian front would be available in the west if Turkey remained neutral.¹¹⁹

Even in this plan there seemed to be more troops

¹¹⁸ "Au sujet du double courant d'opinion de l'état-major Russe à propos du plan de concentration en cas de guerre avec la Triple Alliance". Moulin 16.IV 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

¹¹⁹ Assignment of forces according to the plans of 1899—1901

German front	cavalry	14 divisions, 5 regiments
	infantry	11 army corps, 3 rifle brigades
	artillery	3 mortar regiments
	reserve	10 divisions
	militia	5 divisions
	officers	19,000
	men	900,000
	horses	205,000
	cannons	1,900
	Austrian front	cavalry
infantry		10 army corps, 2 rifle brigades
artillery		1 mortar regiment
reserve		8 divisions
militia		5 divisions
officers		17,000
men		758,000
horses		185,000
cannons	1,800	

concentrated against Germany than against Austria. But in fact the Russians had planned their concentration in such a way that the troops in strength on the Prussian border were only a precaution against a German attack on the rear of the main Russian offensive to the south-west. All this existed with the mental reservation that the army corps could be transported from the Narew front to the south against the Austrians, taking advantage of the internal Polish railway system, if the Germans did not attack. The essential idea was that no useful attack against Germany was possible before the Austrians were beaten. Everything was aimed at this initial victory.¹²⁰

Thus the Russian plan was useless from the French point of view. Moulin was rather sarcastic:

¹¹⁹ Continued

Rumanian front	cavalry	9 regiments
	infantry	1 army corps, 1 rifle brigade
	artillery	1 mortar regiment
	reserve	3 divisions
	officers	2,100
	men	102,000
	horses	23,000
	cannons	300
Odessa and Crimea (the expeditionary corps)	cavalry	4 regiments
	infantry	1 army corps
	reserve	1 division
	militia	1 division
	officers	1,600
	men	83,000
	horses	14,000
	cannons	300
Caucasian front (available in the west if Turkey remained neutral)	Cossacks	3 divisions
	infantry	2 army corps, 3 rifle brigades
	artillery	1 mortar regiment
	reserve	6 divisions, 4 regiments
	officers	5,500
	men	255,000
	horses	82,000
	cannons	532

"Note sur les forces militaires de la Russie d'Europe, novembre 1901"
EMATSH 7 N 1506

¹²⁰ "Sur le plan de concentration contre la Triple Alliance". Moulin 2.I 1899.
EMATSH 7 N 1475

"The Russian general staff officers are without doubt very brilliant, but endowed with an excess of imagination. This defect is unhappily felt very distinctly in the committees which revise annually the plan of troop concentration. It leads to ideas like the shuttling movement between the northern and southern frontier in Poland . . ." ¹²¹

The sketches (maps 14 and 16) where Moulin has featured the Russian concentrations tally with Zaiončkovskii's (map 15) in their general lines, in spite of several differences and inaccuracies in detail. There is no longer any central or main army, it has definitely been divided into two, the Narew army and the Bug army. Rather strong flank armies are in position on the Niemen and in the South-west.

3.8. If Francis Joseph Should Die

In 1898 there had emerged an additional reason for the strong Russian troop concentration on the Austrian border. The old emperor Francis Joseph was known to be suffering from bad health and his death was expected in the near future. It was felt that the Danubian empire was rent by national strife, and it was expected to dissolve once the venerated sovereign passed away. Moulin informed Paris that Russia and Germany might connive at dividing the spoils. Germany would thus gain eight million Austrian Germans. William II might try to buy Russian consent with Galicia as a compensation for the addition to German strength. Moulin supposed that the Russian general staff and the Pan-Slavists would not be content with the Carpathian frontier only but would demand also a blank cheque on the Bosphorus. ¹²²

Neither the war ministry nor the general staff in Paris were

¹²¹ "Au sujet du nouveau plan de concentration". Moulin 10.III 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

¹²² "Au sujet de l'hypothese du démembrement de l'Autriche". Moulin 18.III 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

interested in these hypotheses. But the minister for foreign affairs, Delcassé, was a statesman who saw the danger of a new combination of European powers. He encouraged Moulin to study the Russian intentions further in the light of an eventual Austrian complication.

Moulin reported that the Russian soldiers and patriots believed that an immediate dismemberment of the Austrian empire would occur in the event of Francis Joseph's death. Then the German provinces would immediately and spontaneously join the German empire. Russia would not oppose these developments provided she could foresee legitimate compensation. Moulin had heard this opinion uttered by Saharov, Dragomirov, and the Russian military attaché in Vienna, Voronin.

The changes in the European balance of power would be enormous. Germany would gain strength through the addition of eight million Austrian Germans. Istria would become a German port open on the Mediterranean. In compensation Germany would give Trieste and the Trentino to Italy. Hungary would become independent. Bohemia's fate might cause difficulties, if Russia should demand independence for her in order to maintain a Slav vanguard on the flank of the German empire.

France and Russia could not allow Germany to grow without compensation. If she wanted to avoid a war on two fronts against these powers, she had to give compensation to at least one of them. She might, for example, offer Galicia and Bukovina to Russia. This would be a mediocre acquisition for Russia, because of the 7,5 million inhabitants only four million were Ruthenians or orthodox Russians, while the rest were Poles. But the splendid frontier of the Carpathians would be a consolation. Transylvania could be given to Romania without difficulties. (It seems that Hungarian opinion was ignored by the Russian patriots).

The Russian generals were inclined to leave France without any compensation. They calculated that she could not wish for Belgium or Switzerland. The only compensation that could be thought of was the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine. But Germany certainly was not going to give them up without a war. Therefore France had better submit to renouncing this compensation. Nicholas II was a pacific ruler and would not

accept an offensive war. To Russia Germany would offer compensation without a threat of war, even eagerly; she might even consent to discussing the question of Bohemia.

From this it appeared that the only hope of a war for France was a previous engagement with Russia, or the improbable case of Russian diplomatists being dissatisfied with the compensation obtained by the soldiers. This was not very probable because generally Russian diplomacy was much more moderate in its desires than the general staff. It was true that the Russian patriots and publicists were more exacting. They held an eventual German Istria to be a danger for the Balkan Slavs. They saw the annexation of Austria by Germany as a step on the road to Salonika and Constantinople, or at least towards a stronger German influence on the Sultan. The result might be that German commerce would force its way from Hamburg via Constantinople and Angora to Baghdad. Thus all Russia's hopes in the Orient would be in vain. That was why the patriots demanded Constantinople as a compensation for the annexation of Austria, in addition to and before Galicia and Bukovina.

If these people had been able to make their programme official, the result would surely have been war. Then France would have had the chance of reconquering Alsace and Lorraine. But unfortunately there was not much hope of such a turn.

On the contrary, a great danger menaced France. If the Austrian empire dissolved and the Triple Alliance disappeared, the military convention between France and Russia would be nullified. It had been stipulated that the convention should last as long as the enemy alliance. With the convention nullified, France would have to face alone a Germany of sixty million inhabitants, growing fast, and with a new triple alliance with Italy and Hungary. It was true that the Hungarians were not very friendly towards the Germans, but they disliked the Russians even more.

By this reasoning it was of the utmost importance that a new arrangement be made between France and Russia, while the men who were favourably disposed towards France were in influential positions in the army and in the court.¹²³

¹²³ "Au sujet de certains démarches de l'Empereur d'Allemagne et de l'actua-

Of course, this recommendation was given more urgency by the continuous stream of information concerning the German support for Russia's Far Eastern policy. Clearly it was in the German interest to see the Russian army disappear from the western frontier towards the Pacific.

By the summer of 1899 the Russian general staff was seriously occupied with the Austrian problem. It was true that German schemes in Turkey, the Kaiser's flirtation with the Sultan and expressions of pan-Islamic feelings, caused dissatisfaction in St. Petersburg. But the possibility of the Austrian complication arising on Francis Joseph's death worried the Russian general staff much more.¹²⁴

Four armies were planned for the operation that aimed at securing the compensation for Germany's booty. One army was to occupy Galicia and Bukovina, eventually to advance to help the Rumanians in Transylvania. Another army was to cross the Carpathians in order to help the southern Slavs, whom Russia was going to declare independent, in Croatia, in Slovenia, and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The third army was to advance via Upper Silesia to help the Bohemians, whom Russia would also proclaim independent. The fourth army was to occupy the coasts of the Bosphorus.

The general staff tried to reassure Moulin: all these operations would not absorb as many Russian troops as were required against Austria at present, in case of a war with the Triple Alliance. Consequently, there would remain at least as many troops as before on the frontier against Germany.

All the above-mentioned viewpoints only add up to preliminary plans or sketches for the foreseen operation. No exact information was given on the composition of the four armies, or on their concentration or planned action. The nature of enemy resistance seems to have been totally ignored, for instance, in crossing Upper Silesia, i.e. a German province.

These plans are a good illustration of the Russian "system" of government. At this time no cabinet existed. The soldiers compiled in all earnest plans for redrawing the map of half Europe without consulting the foreign ministry. It is not clear

lité du partage de l'Autriche". Moulin 24.VIII 1899. EMATSH 7 N 1475

¹²⁴ "Eventualité du démembrement de l'Autriche". Moulin 10.IV 1900. EMATSH 7 N 1476

how much even Nicholas II was told.

Thus it is futile to ask whether Russia wanted to dominate the eventually independent Slav states, or to open her way to the Mediterranean or the Indian Ocean. It is not at all clear who was Russia. There existed different currents of opinion in Russia, and something was always wanted by somebody. The decision-making was unorganized and influenced by the strength of the currents of opinion on the command posts of the empire. The viewpoints described above had impregnated the general staff, but it was not until 1914—1916 that they were being received sympathetically at the Foreign Office. The civilian leaders were much more concerned with the reactions of other powers to extravagant Russian appetites. The moment to make actual plans or to act on them never came.

The urgency of these worries abated when the Emperor Francis Joseph did not die — until 1916, of course — and other problems grew more burning. Nevertheless, as late as 1901 Voronin reported from Vienna that Germany was continually scheming for the annexation of the German provinces as well as of Trieste and Pola. William's agents were busily preparing the ground for annexation. The general staff in St. Petersburg was very much inclined to believe these reports, Moulin was told.¹²⁶

3.9. The Dual Alliance Strengthened

Delcassé, the statesman who very nearly made France a great power again, had much reason to be worried over the state of the Dual Alliance by the turn of the century.¹²⁷ It was true that France and Russia had acted together in 1895 in some minor

¹²⁶ "Sur les appétites de l'Allemagne à l'égard de l'Autriche". Moulin 5.II 1901. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹²⁷ Christopher Andrew, *Théophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale*. A Reappraisal of French Foreign Policy 1898—1905. New York 1968. p. 119— gives a clear picture of Delcassé's policy, but does not mention Moulin's alarming reports about the Austrian complication

questions outside Europe, e.g. they had protested against the British administration in Egypt. They had also chased Japan out of her conquests in 1895, where Germany had been a partner, too. But then in 1896 France had not supported Russia's schemes for the Straits. Nor had Russia helped France at the time of the Fashoda crisis in 1898. There were even personal reasons for this mutual coldshouldering: the ministers for foreign affairs of the respective countries, Hanotaux and Murav'ev, did not like each other.

Then there was always the danger of a Russo-German entente, for which William II was eagerly working. It is true that he masked his proposals in the garment of a continental coalition, modelling it on the Shimonoseki combination of France, Russia, and Germany working together. But it all implied that Russia and Germany would compel France to give up her *revanche*, and thus submit Europe to German hegemony.

There remained the Austro-Russian rivalry, but it seemed to have been losing its force since 1897. Influential Russian circles supported the idea of a continental coalition. For instance, *Novoe Vremja* considered England as Russia's traditional enemy, whose designs in Africa and in the Near, Middle, and Far East could be fought only by the combined efforts of the continental powers of Europe.¹²⁸ The Russian conservatives would have dearly loved to have Imperial Germany as their ally against internal enemies as well as against England.¹²⁹ The support of the Emperor William for the Emperor Nicholas ("Willy to Nicky" in their correspondence,) against the Yellow Peril was very much welcome to the latter, who was thus able to wallow in his personal imperialism in the Far East.

Delcassé seems to have taken very seriously also the possibility of the Austrian empire dissolving, a situation in which Germany might buy Russia out of her French alliance with a large compensation from the Austrian heritage, as Moulin had written. That situation would be extremely dangerous, because the military convention would be dissolved *ipso facto* by the dissolving of the Triple Alliance.

¹²⁸ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 1.V 1897. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 16

¹²⁹ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 9.XI 1899. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S.

Delcassé travelled to Russia and discussed the situation with Nicholas and Murav'ev. There it turned out that the latter had not adopted the treacherous plans of the general staff. They agreed that the military convention was to last as long as the entente of 1891, i.e. as long as Russia's and France's interests were identical, independently of the existence of the Triple Alliance. The aim of the convention had been to maintain the general peace in Europe. Now Delcassé succeeded in including a paragraph where the aim was stated to be that of maintaining the balance of power in Europe. This was "a means of realizing France's wishes and hopes".¹³⁰

Of course, leaving France without compensation if Germany got Austria and Russia got Galicia and the Straits would not have been "maintaining the balance of power". There was no other imaginable compensation for France but Alsace and Lorraine, "France's wishes and hopes".

Another contingency discussed on Delcassé's visit was a war against England. She was not so dangerous as earlier, because of her entanglement in South Africa. But it was agreed that the Dual Alliance would also act in the event of a war against England. Thus the convention covered all possible combinations in Europe. A war against England implied action on the Russo-Indian border, too.

Delcassé also discussed the principal military weakness of the convention. This was the fact that the first and decisive (as it was supposed to be) battle against 18 German and 2—4 Italian army corps was to be fought on the fourteenth day by the French, while the Russian contingent of 700 000 men would be ready to act at the earliest on the twenty-eighth day, when the decision in the west would already be past history. Delcassé urged the emperor to speed up the building of strategic railways from the interior of the empire to her western border in order to enable an earlier attack against Germany to be mounted.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Delcassé to the President of the Republic 12.VIII 1899. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 34

¹³¹ "Note secrète sur les entretiens qui ont lieu entre l'Empereur de Russie et M.Delcassé 6.VIII 1899 et 25.IV 1901". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 35

3.10. Military Co-operation Promised

Reviewing the technical details of the military convention were left to the chiefs of the allied general staffs, Delanne and Saharov, in the summer of 1900.¹³²

Now Saharov gave up a point which Obručev had defended tenaciously in 1892. The generals agreed that Italy and Austria were not as dangerous as had been thought in 1892. Austria had been weakened in consequence of her internal problems. Italy had to keep part of her army on her Austrian border, because of their mutual enmity. Thus the simultaneous mobilization by France and Russia was necessary only in case of a German mobilization or that of the whole of the Triple Alliance. But a partial or even a total mobilization by a lesser partner in the Triple Alliance, i.e. Italy or Austria, would now imply Franco-Russian mobilization only after further previous communications and agreement by the two signatories.

Of course, this signified that France was not automatically going to support Russia against Austria in a Balkan conflict. The danger of a Franco-Italian conflict was receding as Italy's relations with her allies got cooler.

It was difficult to integrate the military action of the allies. Delanne calculated that Germany would attack France with 18 army corps on the twelfth day supported by 2—4 Italian army corps on the eighteenth-twentieth days. Thus only five German corps with a few reserve divisions would be left against Russia. France was able to mobilize as fast as Germany. Thus the great decisive battle would be fought on the fifteenth-eighteenth day on the Franco-German frontier. If Russia remained passive, Germany would be free to leave only 2—3 army corps on her eastern border. In any case she was going to beat first France, and then transfer her forces to the east. Delanne asked Saharov to do his utmost to engage at least 5—6 German corps on the Russian frontier. In case of a German attack against Russia first, France on her part could promise to attack Germany with

¹³² "Revue de l'entretien du 2 juillet (19 juin) 1900 entre les chefs d'état-majors généraux des armées russe et française". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 35. DDF XVI/1 n:o 208

all vigour and all might, without thinking about the Italian danger.

Saharov was satisfied with this promise, of course. But he was not able in his turn to give satisfaction to the French general. He admitted the probability of a German attack in the west, because France could be beaten decisively in one battle, while Russia was so large that Germany had no hope of a speedy decision on her eastern front. But the western attack was by no means a certainty. Germany had numerous strategic railways running towards her eastern border, and there was the necessity of helping Austria against Russia. Therefore Russia had to be prepared for an attack of 14 army corps from East Prussia, and two army corps from Silesia, in addition to the 14 Austrian army corps. — This hypothesis left only seven German corps against France. — Russia had to maintain a strictly defensive attitude until she saw that the Germans had adopted the first hypothesis, the attack against France. Then, on the twenty-eighth day, she would have the promised 700 000 men mobilized and concentrated for an attack.

Delanne remarked that the Germans, after having beaten the French, would thus have ten days to transfer their troops to the east. On the twenty-eighth day the Russians were not to have five or six corps against them but four, six, or eight additional corps from the west. Russia had better attack at once after ascertaining that the German attack was directed towards the west and destroy the German troops on the frontier with the forces she might have available, without waiting for the concentration of her whole army.

Delanne also said that France would be "completely satisfied" if Russia could improve her railways in order to speed up her troop concentrations.

A new aspect, which had not been discussed in 1892, was the eventual enmity of England. It was agreed that Russia was to put pressure against Afghanistan or India. She was not able to reinforce her troops in Central Asia enough for serious action, but the pressure would be enough to prevent England from transporting her Indian army to fight against France. After the Russian railway network was connected to the Transcaspian railway, Russia would be able to concentrate 300 000—350 000 men against India in six weeks. France, on her part, could exert pressure by concentrating 100 000—150 000 men on the

Channel coast, which would prevent England from sending her home troops to India.

If the Triple Alliance should join England in a war against the Dual Alliance, these pressures were to remain, but in a weakened form, of course. Only the local Russian troops on the Afghan border would be available for pressure on India. France would be able to concentrate an equal number, but of colonial troops, on her Channel coast. The principal enemy would be Germany, as in a war against the Triple Alliance alone.

Next year, 1901, Saharov discussed the identical problems with a new partner, General Pendezec — French politics and the Dreyfus affair consumed military chiefs in a rapid succession. The French general, as always, asked Russia to help France by drawing enough of the German army corps from the western frontier to give France a chance of success in the decisive battle which was to be fought starting on the fourteenth day. The Russian vanguard should attack on the fourteenth day and engage at least 6—7 German corps. It was of key importance for the French to receive good news from the east on the fourteenth day, news of a Russian attack even if not of a Russian victory. That would be important for French morale, especially if France were to lose the first battle.

Pendezec also remarked how desirable it would be if the great Russian attack discussed in 1892 could be advanced ten days.

Saharov answered that he would take notice of the French wishes in his planning work. Perhaps the Russian vanguard would be able to start its action on the eighteenth day, and the mass of 700 000 men promised in 1892 might be concentrated on the twenty-eighth day to take the offensive against Germany. But beginning the action on the fourteenth day and advancing the principal offensive ten days was possible only if the Russian railways were to be improved. The work would take two years and would impose a great strain on Russian finances.

Pendezec answered that the matter was of such importance for France's future that the French minister for foreign affairs was prepared to discuss with his Russian colleague the financial combinations to enable Russia to build the necessary railways in the near future.

France on her part was to fulfil everything promised in the previous discussion. The action taken by the French forces would be even more vigorous than previously supposed because of the progress in the development of her armed forces.

The generals agreed once more that the defeat of Germany was the primary objective even if the war was made necessary by German ambitions on some Austro-Hungarian provinces.

There was not much new to be added to the discussion regarding an eventual war against England. Saharov only emphasized that it was only after the completion of the Orenburg-Tashkent line that Russia would be able to concentrate 300 000 men to menace British India. Until that time the pressure on the Afghan borders would be much less imposing. Pendezec answered that France, too, held the completion of the Orenburg-Tashkent line to be important. Saharov promised that the work would start next spring, that part of the rolling stock had already been ordered and that the trace of the line had already been measured out.¹³³

Delcassé did not leave the revitalised military convention resting only on the discussions between the chiefs of staff. He revisited Nicholas II and extracted from the emperor a promise that Russia would build the railway lines which Saharov held essential for the simultaneous attack of Russia and France.¹³⁴

The military convention was also ratified by an exchange of letters between Delcassé and Lamsdorff, Nicholas's new minister for foreign affairs.¹³⁵

Next year, 1902, Saharov promised to Pendezec that Russia would construct the line Orenburg-Tashkent (1881 kilometres) and Bologoe-Sedlec (1100 kilometres) by 1905 and 1906. (map 17).¹³⁶

Pendezec visited Russia again in 1903 and was told by Nicholas II that his first troops would be ready on the tenth day. It was probable that three-quarters or four-fifths of the German corps would attack France, but Nicholas stressed that

¹³³ "Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 8/21 fevrier 1901 entre les chefs d'état-major généraux des armées russe et française". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 35. DDF I/2 n:o 112

¹³⁴ Delcassé to Lamsdorff 16/3.V 1901. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 35

¹³⁵ Lamsdorff to Delcassé 16/3.V 1901. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 35

¹³⁶ Saharov to Pendezec 31.II 1902. EMATSH 7 N 1507

there was no certainty of it. Russia would be able to undertake the promised offensive only after it was definitely known that the mass of the German forces was turned towards the west.

Saharov explained that the first Russian troops would be detrained on the tenth day and ready to fight on the twelfth day. The first echelon was to consist of 350 000 men. Thus considerable progress had been realized since the chiefs of staff had started their annual conferences. And when the railway from Bologoe to Sedlec were completed, the echelons would consist of 100 000 additional men.

Pendezec composed a report on these talks that was quite optimistic. Little by little the desired objective was being attained: cannon would be heard simultaneously from the west and from the east. He supposed that the Russians were going to attack the Germans at once, but he had refrained from asking any details: "they were to be dealt with by the eventual commanders in chief". — This was a bit odd, because the conferences of the chiefs of staff had been organized in order to concert measures and preparations in order to enable immediate and simultaneous action in case of Germany's attack, when no further conferring by the commanders in chief would be possible, nor was indeed foreseen in the convention. Further on we shall see that subsequent Russian chiefs of staff thought that Saharov had promised more than Russia was able to perform and thus Pendezec seems to have been overly optimistic.

Pendezec was given the general lines of Saharov's plans, which had not been much changed since previous years (as described in the chapter above). It was supposed that the Germans would concentrate 6—7 corps in East Prussia, while the Austrians would attack with 5—6 corps from Przemysl to Volynia and with 7—8 corps from Galicia to Poland. The Russians had their first or Niemen army facing the Prussian frontier and the second army on the Narew and the Vistula. (map 18). Their reserve was between the Narew and the Bug armies. There was an army facing the Austrians in the Bug-Lublin region and another army in the south-west. One army was to watch the Rumanians. The expeditionary corps was preparing for the invasion of Turkey over the Black Sea.

Pendezec thought that it was easy for the Russians to attack in the north if they had their 350 000 men concentrated on the

tenth day, while the Germans were to have their 250 000 men ready on the fourteenth day. The Niemen army was to crush the German left flank, while the Narew army was to attack Allenstein. Thus the Germans would be compelled to evacuate East Prussia and to retreat to the Vistula. But by then the Russians would have their full force available, which meant a triple superiority over the Germans. Thus they would be able to take the route to Berlin, having only the decrepit fortress of Custrin in front of them.

This operation could not be disturbed by what happened in the south. The Austrians would not be ready for action until the twenty-second day, and by then Dragomirov would have attacked them. Nor would the Germans be able to help the Austrians, being in battle since twelfth day.

These plans presupposed that the principal German armies were concentrated in the west. If Germany left only 6—7 corps in Alsace-Lorraine, she could attack Russia with 32 (Austrian and German) corps. Then Russia could only defend herself in Poland.¹³⁷

Therefore it was of vital importance to know at the very moment of the declaration of war whether the Germans were going to attack in the east or in the west. It was urgently necessary to have reliable means of communication between the two general staffs. But there the difficulties were so great that the problem took several years to be solved. — This will be dealt with in a chapter of its own.

Thus Pendezec's report would have been quite cloudless but for his discussions with Kuropatkin, which already cast a small shadow of the troubles that were in fact waiting in the very near future. The minister of war had visited Japan. He told Pendezec that his visit had convinced him that a war with Japan would be costly, inglorious, and futile. His pessimistic report had not pleased the emperor and his position was shaky. Far East policy had been transferred to the charge of Admiral Alexeev. It was rumoured that Saharov had been designated Kuropatkin's successor.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ "Rapport du Général Pendezec, Chef d'Etat-Major Général de l'Armée au Ministre de la Guerre sur sa Mission en Russie, Manoeuvres de Pskov, Aout 1903". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. DDF III/2, annexe IV

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4. Adventure and Defeat

4.1. Far Eastern Schemes

Russia's attention had begun to turn towards the Far East seriously after 1895 when her advance in Central Asia had been stopped. The realization of the dreams of Russia's manifest destiny in Asia was being made possible in direct relation to the progress made in the building of Witte's Siberian railway (started in 1891). Russia stepped into the Far East political arena together with France and Germany in 1895, chasing Japan back from her Chinese conquests. Witte had thought of a peaceful economic infiltration of the Far East in harmony with China. A treaty of friendship had been concluded in 1896, allowing Witte to build the Siberian railway through Manchuria towards Vladivostok. But the temptation for an imperialism of the older military model was too strong. The peninsula of Liaotung was occupied in 1898 and Port Arthur was established as the Russian port at warm sea that the landlocked empire had sought for since the days of Peter the Great.

Then the Boxer rebellion gave Russia a new challenge. The French ambassador reported:

"The Russian press rejoices over the disorder in China. They see the anarchy as harming the interests of other powers, which is advantageous to Russia. Because Russia has provinces on the Chinese border, she will be able to occupy Chinese territory and then, under the protection of her troops, she will be able

to develop these areas when the Siberian railway is completed. Of all the Christian nations Russia has the best chance of creating cordial relations with the Asiatics, because of her gentleness with these peoples, who are treated with little ceremony by other civilized nations".¹³⁹

The Amur and Siberian military districts were mobilized in the summer of 1900 because of the Chinese disorders.¹⁴⁰ These troops consisted of the first Siberian corps in Pečili and Port Arthur, the second corps in Harbin, and the third corps at Sretensk. At Vladivostok a landing force was being prepared. These troops numbered 172 000 men; in addition there were 62 500 men not included in the army corps.¹⁴¹ Moulin reported that this number was double that of the pre-crisis effectives.¹⁴²

A strong Russian detachment took part in the relief of Peking, and after that the Russians remained in the Manchurian areas through which they had marched.

"The military situation in Manchuria is seen only as a pretext for the Russian occupation (by outsiders), but in fact the occupation is necessary because the population is terrorized by the Hunhuzes in bands of up to one thousand, armed with cannons".

Also Chinese troops were reported on the Manchurian border.¹⁴³

Of course it would have been inadmissible to let the Chinese pacify their provinces: and very probably they would not have been able to do it. Thus, apparently, it was all right for the Russians to show their consideration towards the local population.

It is well known that Witte opposed this policy of violence, nor did Kuropatkin like turning Russia's forces away from the menaced western frontier. As far as he was able to do so, the

¹³⁹ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 9.XI 1900. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 17

¹⁴⁰ "Mesures militaires en Chine". Moulin 25.VI 1900. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁴¹ "Composition des troupes concentrées en Extrême-Orient". Moulin 7.VIII 1900. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁴² "Sur les forces qui seront maintenues en Extrême-Orient". Moulin 15.I 1901. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁴³ "Situation militaire en Mandchourie". Moulin 25.III 1902. EMATSH 7 N 1476

minister for foreign affairs, Count Lamsdorff, supported Witte's opposition. Moulin reported how Witte was overthrown by the united efforts of Plehwe, state secretary Bezobrazov, and Admiral Alexeev, backed by Grand Duke Alexander Mihailovič.

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Plehwe is supposed to have supported the Far Eastern adventure out of opportunism, i.e. because he knew that it pleased the emperor, but also because he wanted to distract the malcontents "with a little victorious war", or because of his rivalry with Witte. Bezobrazov, Alexeev, and Alexander Mihailovič were members of the notorious court clique which Nicholas II had collected around him and which was forming an alternative government.

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Moulin continued that the Grand Duke would probably soon be called to direct the projected ministry of commerce and industry. Not being able, as a grand duke, to be appointed minister, he would lead the ministry through a combination resembling that with which the Grand Duke Aleksei (Grand Admiral of the Fleet) actually directed the navy, i.e. through an acting Navy minister. There had also been a proposal for the creation of a ministry of colonies for Bezobrazov.¹⁴⁴ Of these possible combinations the only one that materialized was the appointment of Admiral Alexeev as viceroy. In this way Far Eastern policy was detached from the competence of the responsible ministries in St. Petersburg.

But Moulin knew also that the Far Eastern adventure was not caused solely by the nefarious influence of the court clique. It was the result of the personal policy of the emperor. He had always been interested in Asian schemes of aggrandizement. As a young man, Nicholas had visited Japan and had been president of the committee for the Siberian railway. His policy was not the result of Bezobrazov's influence. The state secretary had simply been able to make himself an advocate of a policy that was in reality the synthesis of the sovereign's

¹⁴⁴ "Le remaniement ministériel en Russie". Moulin 5.XI 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1506

secret desires.¹⁴⁵

Japan saw Russia threatening her schemes in the neighbouring countries. She tried to protest against Russia's permanent occupation of Manchuria and her encroachment on Korea, but in vain. Then Japan found a friend in England, who viewed the naval situation on the Pacific with concern: the growing Russian squadron there was threatening England's naval supremacy, while Russia's Manchurian policy seemed a menace to England's commercial preponderance in China. Thus England gave up her "splendid isolation" and concluded with Japan a treaty of neutrality (in the event of either party getting involved in a war with a third power) or mutual help (in the event of there being more than one enemy, i.e. if France joined Russia). This was irritating for Russia, but it did not make her renounce her Far Eastern schemes. The end of the South African War also caused a painful feeling and a sentiment of irritation in Russia. In St. Petersburg people had got into the habit of thinking that the war would go on for ever, swallowing up endless thousands of soldiers and millions of pounds, thus exhausting England. The Russians were angry with the Boers for giving up their fight, because then the English were free to paralyze Russia's freedom of action in Suez, in Persia, in China, in Afghanistan, etc.¹⁴⁶ But this was only an irritation, and it caused no voluntary abandonment of the forward movement in the Far East.

As mentioned earlier, Kuropatkin visited Japan in 1903 and returned from there with the idea that the country was powerfully armed and that a war was inevitable if some concessions were not made. But Bezobrazov persuaded the Tsar that Russia had no need to be afraid of Japan. Nicholas answered that there would be no war because he did not want war.¹⁴⁷ — Such an attitude undoubtedly rested on the assumption that because the Japanese were a coloured people, it was unthinkable that they would dare to oppose Russia, a great power and a white, "Christian" colonial power.

¹⁴⁵ "Coup d'oeil d'ensemble sur la situation générale". Moulin 6.X 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁴⁶ "Les Russes et la fin de la guerre Sud-Africaine". Moulin 9.VI 1902. EMATSH 7 N 1506

¹⁴⁷ Rapport sur un voyage exécuté en Russie Juin-Août 1904 par le Chef d'escadre Fraenkel". EMATSH 7 N 1485

Japan was reported to be mobilizing at the end of 1903, but Manchuria was not evacuated by the Russians. Nicholas told his ministers that this would not happen, and ordered them to find a *modus vivendi* with other powers to avoid the "continuous complaints" of these powers¹⁴⁸ — an impossible task because nothing was to be given up. On the contrary, the forward policy was pressed on in Korea. Grand Duke Alexander and Bezobrazov did not consent to giving up their planned settlement of 200 000 people at the mouth of the Yalu river. This was seen as a commercially advantageous enterprise but also as an advantageous bridgehead for Russia on the Korean frontier. Bezobrazov demanded troops from Kuropatkin for this imperialistic enterprise.

This Kuropatkin refused for fear of the Japanese reaction. Kuropatkin was very pessimistic because his warnings were not heeded.¹⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier, the emperor was displeased with Kuropatkin, and also with Lamsdorf whom he reproached for the failure of all negotiations with the Japanese.

By the beginning of 1904 the ominous fact was known that Japan had got her finances in order with loans on the home and American market — the American Jewish bankers detested Russia's anti-semitic policy.¹⁵⁰

4.2. Russias's Strength Disappears to the Far East

The situation had seemed comparatively tranquil in 1902. Only a little over 100 000 men had stood under arms then in the Far East.¹⁵¹ But as the tension grew, reinforcements were sent to the Far East, 127 000 men by October 1903, and an additional

¹⁴⁸ "Le Mandchourie ne sera pas évacué" Moulin 20.IX 1903. Moulin 20.IX 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁴⁹ "Préparatifs de descente au Japon". Moulin 30.IX—9.X 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁵⁰ "Les événements d'Extrême-Orient". Moulin 29.I 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1506

150 000 were to be sent during the next two to three months. Both General Saharov on the general staff and Admiral Avellan on the naval staff affirmed to Moulin that all necessary precautions had been taken and that Russia was well prepared for any attack by Japan.¹⁵²

The preparations were not as effective and energetic as the officers declared. In their view, the Japanese would not, of course, dare to attack Russia.

"Admiral Alexeev in an official report declared categorically that the Pacific squadron was too powerful to fear defeat in a battle against the Japanese, which confirmed the government in their naive (this report was given in 1906 and by then it was seen to have been naive) confidence that there would be no war".¹⁵³

Alexeev was reported to be convinced of the futility of concessions, which in his view would only encourage Japan to increase her demands. She would not be content with Korea only; she would demand Manchuria if Russia did not stand up to her. In any case humouring Japan only was of no use, since Japanese intransigence was caused by English intrigue. The best way of easing the Far Eastern situation was to threaten the Afghan borders.

Colonel Vannovskii, the military attaché in Japan, was also disposed to judge the Japanese army severely. The success of the expeditionary corps to China (in 1900, when the Japanese had killed Chinese as effectively as the European soldiers did) was deceptive. The cream of the Japanese army had been skimmed to form the corps. He considered the Japanese very

¹⁵¹ Effectives in the Asian military districts

	1902	spring 1903
Caucasian military district	102,250	.
Turkestan military district	53,309	.
Siberian military district	13,217	.
Amur military district	65,710	66,500
Province of Kwang-Tung	15,207	17,000
Railway guard in Manchuria	25,000	26,000

"Effectifs des troupes russes dans les circonscriptions militaires de la Russie d'Asie". Moulin 5.VII 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁵² "Situation en extrême-orient". Moulin 20.X 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁵³ "Critique du général Martynoff". Moulin 16.XII 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

obtuse and capable of conceiving rather odd ideas. Moulin gathered from Vannovskii's comments that in the event of a war the Russians intended to invade Korea.¹⁵⁵

By this time the Russian general staff seems to have become rather eager for a Far Eastern war — which might explain why Nicholas II favoured Saharov. The general staff thought that the Manchurian railway or the lines connecting it with China proper could not be allowed to fall under Japanese or English domination. Neither could the Japanese be allowed to have the southern tip of Korea, because in Japanese or other enemy hands it would be a new Gibraltar closing the approaches to Vladivostok. Thus no new Japanese troops could be admitted to Korea. Japan might be given economic concessions there, but even so the forests and mines of northern Korea were to be exploited by Russia.

The general staff was planning the transport of the tenth and eighteenth army corps to the Far East.¹⁵⁶ The reinforcement mentioned above seem to have been the thirty-first and thirty-fifth divisions of the eighteenth corps. These corps had been part of the armies which were intended to fight the Austrians, but since the agreement of 1903 on the Balkan status quo there was "no reason" to keep these troops in the west.¹⁵⁷

Thus it seems that even if the Tsar was pacific and his minister for war apprehensive, his general staff was not. On the contrary, it welcomed a war which to it seemed easy and gave promise of new areas falling under Russian domination. (The grandeur of its appetites should be clear enough now bearing in mind its earlier plans for carving up the Emperor Francis Joseph's heritage).

Moulin does not seem to have known of the plans made in 1898 and revised in 1901 for a war against Japan. After a defensive phase, while a sufficient number of troops were being concentrated, Korea was to be invaded and after that a landing to be made in Japan — for which a landing corps was being prepared in Vladivostok — and in Japan the decisive victory

¹⁵⁵ "Conversation avec l'attaché militaire russe au Japon". Noulin 10.IV 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁵⁶ "Sur les affaires d'extrême-Orient". Moulin 30.XI 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁵⁷ Moulin to war minister 25.VI 1903. EMATSH 7 N 1476

was to be won.¹⁵⁸

There was no reason for the French to rejoice. Moulin reminded General Saharov of his promise to have the Orenburg-Tashkent and Sedlec-Bologoe railways built, and calculated that 6,3 million roubles would be enough for it. But Saharov said that at least 11 million roubles would be necessary but was not available, because the preparations in the Far East absorbed all funds.

Moulin was desolate on thus learning that the completion of the strategic lines, on which depended the possibility, vital for France, of a Russian offensive against Germany at an early moment, was in danger of being retarded.

"This offensive, readiness for which the Russian general staff virtually, even though vaguely, promised in 1902 and in explicit and precise terms in 1903 . . . shall it again be adjourned *ad calendas graecas*? Happily, Saharov is the best minister of war from our point of view, a man with whom it is easy to reach a mutual understanding. But it is not certain that he is influential enough in the decisions of the Russian government to ensure the triumph of truth and honesty, without a new *démarche* by the French government".¹⁵⁹

The cause of truth and honesty was also threatened by the danger of an Anglo-French conflict in consequence of the war between their allies. Yet there was less of a chance of a successful battle against England than during the Fashoda crisis. The only area where the British empire could effectively be threatened was the Russo-Indian border. But Russia was not able to concentrate more than 75 000—80 000 men there before the Orenburg-Tashkent railway was completed. Only then could a really dangerous attack of 300 000—350 000 men be launched. But the railway was far from complete. France had spared neither *démarches* nor money; her ambassador, her chief of general staff, her minister

¹⁵⁸ *Istoriya russko-japonskoï voïny 1904—1905 gg.* Ed.II. Rostunov. AN SSSR & Institut voennoï istorii Ministerstva oborony SSSR. Moskva 1977. p. 93—

¹⁵⁹ "Conversation avec le général Sakharof sur les chemins de fer d'Oranienbourg-Tachkent et Siedletz-Bologoe". Moulin 10.IV 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 37

for foreign affairs had supported the Russian minister for foreign affairs and general staff in their battle against Witte's opposition. But the minister of finance had delayed the Orenburg-Tashkent railway; he had even transferred part of the money and men to the Siberian railway, and consequently the Central Asian railway could be completed in 1905 at the earliest. Thus the whole burden of a war against England had to be carried alone by France.¹⁶⁰

Moulin saw the situation in the same light as previously and was consistent in his calculations. But of course he was not quite up to date. Delcassé in Paris had seen that the eleven millions for the Orenburg-Tashkent and Bologoe-Sedlec railway were not enough to secure France's position. By no means could France continue to be an enemy of England when Russia disappeared as a counterweight to the German menace. Delcassé concluded that the only means of avoiding an entanglement with England was to enter into an entente with her, forgetting all ancient colonial disputes. The British statesmen in their turn were worried lest their alliance with Japan, aimed at consolidating the naval position on the Pacific and in China, would drag them into a war which would be much more difficult than the South African War, and with the growing menace of German naval might looming in the background. An Entente Cordial would remove all danger of a Franco-English conflict, and this was achieved in 1904.

4.3. The Defeat of an Ally

The Japanese crippled the Russian Pacific fleet by a surprise attack (27.I/9.II 1904). After that it was easy for them to maintain their armies in Manchuria. Port Arthur was invested and the Russian army thrown back in the Battle of Laojan (July—August). Port Arthur could not be relieved (October

¹⁶⁰ Moulin to war minister to MAE 12.II 1904. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S.17

1904) and capitulated (20.XII 1904/2.I 1905). After that the Russians lost the Battle of Mukden (February/March 1905). Their last hope was the Baltic fleet, which was sent half way round the world to be defeated at the Battle of Tsushima (15/28.V 1905).¹⁶¹

The course of the war and the subsequent revolution is too well known to be told here in any more detail, even though General Silvestre, detached by the French general staff to follow the Russian army, sent in plenty of interesting information.

Moulin continued reporting from St. Petersburg. His despatches do not give any coherent picture of the Russian mobilization¹⁶² because it was not a coherent affair.

"Dragomirov and Saharov blame the improvisations of Kuropatkin, who has collected detachments from various troops and has not sent the existing units to the Far East".¹⁶³

At first it seemed that starting the war had given rise to the usual national enthusiasm¹⁶⁴ (although it is to be noted that Moulin discussed with officers but only observed the rank and file, who seemed to be "in admirably good humour"). But even so the war was not satisfactory from the French point of view because it freed the Germans from the Russian military menace.

"If the effectives of the Russian garrisons on her western frontier have not yet been reduced (July 1904) in spite of the Emperor William's undisguised incitement, at least the modern artillery has been taken out of Poland to be replaced with cannon of an old model, which has proved inadequate in the operations in Manchuria and which would be quite useless in a European war".¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ There is no end of literature concerning the war. *Istoriya russko-japonskoi* . . . includes a concise bibliography.

¹⁶² "Mise en état de défense des côtes de la Baltique". Moulin 8.III 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁶³ "Désorganisation causé par les renforts envoyés en Mandchourie". Moulin 10.III 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁶⁴ "Etat moral de l'armée russe". Moulin 10.III 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁶⁵ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 2/15.VII 1904. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 17

By the autumn of 1904 the Far Eastern army consisted of ten army corps and more were being sent to form at least three armies. Kuropatkin had been sent plenty of artillery projectiles, but three-fourths of them had been consumed during the first great Battle of Laojan; the magazines of the Warsaw military district were exhausted and the commanding-general there said that they had nothing to shoot with should the Austrians or Germans cross the frontier. Casualties in the Far East also amounted to more than expected. These were not merely battle casualties, but were also due to disease.¹⁶⁶ It was also noted that

"the Russian infantry tactics do not correspond to the demands of modern war... Deceived by the success of 1812 Russia has not noticed the necessity of abandoning ancient errors as did other armies in the way shown by Napoleon. The tactics of the last century served well in the wars against the Caucasians, Turks, Turkmens — valorous enemies without doubt, but inferior from the tactical point of view.¹⁶⁷ ... Tactics consisted only of shooting, with the expectation that in the end the Russians, being more numerous, would remain alone in Manchuria".¹⁶⁸

For the disorder of the Russian organization Kuropatkin was blamed:

"He dismembered all great organic units in order to create detachments for all of his friends... (There was a) continuous changing of resolutions and dispositions, which led to the disorganization of all branches of the service..."¹⁶⁹

The Russian army not only disappeared from the German border to the Far East. It got disorganized, it was bled white, it lost its material, it suffered defeat, and lost all military value in the end.

¹⁶⁶ "Effectifs de l'armée de Mandchourie 26.XI 1904". Moulin 30.XI 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁶⁷ "Lettre particulière de g'al Silvestre" 30.XI 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁶⁸ "Lettre particulière de g'al Silvestre" 26.XII 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁶⁹ "Au sujet de deux lettres du généraux Jilinsky et Bilderling". Moulin 5.X 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

The voyage of the Baltic fleet brought nearer also the danger of an Anglo-Russian conflict. The British navy followed closely the heroes of the North Sea incident, and the Russians took military precautionary measures in the Transcaspien district.¹⁷⁰ By French mediation the North Sea incident was smoothed over so as not to give the German emperor the chance of realizing his dream of a Russo-German alliance and forcing France to accept German hegemony. The Emperor William eagerly supported the voyage: Hapag steamers carried — English! — coal for the Tsar's warships. And France had to allow them to utilize her ports or anchorages in the colonies — in spite of Japanese protests — in order to save the Dual Alliance in the face of competition from the Kaiser's gestures of friendship.¹⁷¹

As mentioned earlier, the Entente Cordiale eliminated the danger of a Franco-English conflict. But France's relations with Japan were rather tense. And her friendship with both Russia and England, who had been enemies for a long time, left her in a "delicate" situation vis-à-vis Russia. In Russia there were

"certain chauvinistic elements who might turn inaccessible to all sensible arguments and very accessible to insinuations aiming at the dissolving of the Franco-Russian alliance".¹⁷²

Soon it was reported that the Russian civilians were repeating that

"this is said to be a war with the objective of reaching an outlet for Russia to a sea free from ice, but in reality it is only a war for the profit of Grand Dukes and persons in high places, while the costs it causes are burdening the people, who are already poor enough without them".¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Moulin to war minister 5.XI 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁷¹ This has been admirably studied by Ohto Manninen, *The Second Russian Pacific Squadron and French Neutrality. Problems during the Russo-Japanese War 1904—1905. Archivum Historicum 68*, edidit Societas Historica Finlandiae, Helsinki 1975, p. 91—209.

¹⁷² "Envoi d'une note secrète relative au cas d'intervention de l'Angleterre dans le conflit russo-japonais". Moulin 12.II 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁷³ "Rapport sur un voyage executé en Russie en Juin-Aout 1904 par chef d'escadre Fraenkel". EMATSH 7 N 1485

The military tried to put on a brave face. Saharov was "not at all disturbed" by the North Sea incident¹⁷⁴ and when Port Arthur fell, he said that it had stood longer than expected.¹⁷⁵ Like all other "serious" men in high places, he did not, after Mukden, admit any other solution but continuing the war — on the condition of Kuropatkin's dismissal¹⁷⁶ — in spite of the fact that the internal situation in Russia threatened the conduct of the war.¹⁷⁷ Kuropatkin was dismissed,¹⁷⁸ but only beaten scraps of the army were left for his successor Linevič.¹⁷⁹ The Battle of Tsushima was "a day of heroism in respect of which the army, the navy, and the entire nation expected an explanation with a profound dolour".¹⁸⁰ The explanation was, of course, the inability of the rusty Russian system to organize a modern war, an explanation which the nation in its revolutionary movement seemed to assume. But still the general staff persisted. The ninth, twelfth, nineteenth and twenty-first army corps were mobilized in order to be transported to the east.¹⁸¹ In spite of Roosevelt's offer of mediation and Nicholas's acceptance of it, Saharov persisted in his opinion that the war was to be continued.¹⁸² In fact, Linevič's army grew numerically very strong, but still unable to attack. The Japanese were also exhausted by their successful operations, and thus no great battle ensued.¹⁸³

Moulin concluded his war-time reports by saying that the Russian soldier did not deserve any reproach, although the men

¹⁷⁴ "Conversation avec le général Sakharoff". Moulin 5.XI 1904. EMATSH 7 N 1476

¹⁷⁵ "Impression produite dans les sphères militaires par la chute de Porth Arthur". Moulin 10.I 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁷⁶ "Situation général de la guerre". Moulin 28.I 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁷⁷ "Courant d'opinion en faveur de la paix". Moulin 25.II 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁷⁸ "Sur le remplacement du Général Kouropatkine". Moulin 20.III 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁷⁹ "Au sujet des pertes de l'armée de Mandchourie". Moulin 20.III 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

"Situation général de l'armée de Mandchourie". Moulin 4.IV 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁸⁰ "Opinion de l'état-major russe sur la bataille de Tsou-shima". Moulin 2.VI 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁸¹ "Situation de Guerre". Moulin 10.VII 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁸² "Au sujet des bruits de paix et de la continuation de la guerre". Moulin 15.VI 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁸³ "Situation de Guerre". Moulin 1.VII 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

on active service were incomparably better than the reservists, and the militia battalions were very feebly trained. The reserve officers had not been good leaders because of their lack of instruction. The professional officers had been distinguished by their self-denial, bravery, and devotion, but also by their lack of initiative, comprehension of the situation, and decision. The general backwardness of Russia had naturally been reflected in both the soldiers and the officers. The worst mistake in the conduct of operations had been the improvisation of the various detachments, which had ruptured the established organization.

A remarkable fact about the war was the enormous consumption of ammunition. For instance, 1 920 730 cartridges in a battle of five days (30.IX—4.X 1904). But the conclusion of a study of artillery, cavalry, and infantry action during the war showed that there had emerged nothing to shake the established bases of conducting battle. As always, rifle and cannon fire were there only for the purpose of sweeping the road free for the bayonet, which completed the bloody work.¹⁸⁴ — This conclusion was shaken only by several years of slaughter in the great war in 1914—1917. "The enormous consumption of ammunition" was also to cause a fresh surprise in the autumn of 1914. With the wisdom of hindsight it is easy to be ironical about this military conservatism, but the burden of tradition was not easy to abandon. Nor was it easy to reinvigorate the Russian system.

4.4. Changes in Russian Government and Politics

The Peace of Portsmouth was an unexpected success for Russia because Japan's victories had exhausted her, too. Russia lost

¹⁸⁴ "Enseignements de la Guerre de Mandchourie par le Colonel à l'état-major Niézhnamoff, 23. division, xvii corps d'armée". EMATSH 7 N 1477
"Suite des enseignements de la guerre par le LtCol Niezaemoff". Moulin 2.I 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

her conquests and Sakhalin, i.e. all dreams of a dominating position in the Pacific region. But she did not lose any of her own territory, the Manchurian railway remained under Russian control, and an indemnity to Japan was masked as a payment for the upkeep of Russian prisoners of war in Japan. Consequently, the imperialist party in Japan was not satisfied, and for a few years Russo-Japanese relations remained tense.

Internal troubles, disorders, strikes, mutinies and jacqueries compelled the Tsar to renounce his autocracy in October 1905. The Duma, a legislative organ, was established in 1906. Too many unruly democrats were brought in by the first experiments, and a new electoral law which favoured the well-to-do classes was promulgated in 1907.

Witte had negotiated the tolerable peace at Portsmouth. Then he was appointed prime minister and led the suppression of the Moscow rebellion in December 1905 and started negotiations on a French loan to reconstruct Russia's finances. He was too much of a success for Nicholas II and was dismissed in the spring of 1906. For a moment it seemed possible that democratic elements might be recruited in the government, but in the end "bonapartism" was accepted as a better alternative: Stolypin's programme was the suppression of popular movements but also reforms in agriculture, industrial relations, and in the administration. A restricted parliamentarism was combined with the Tsar's autocracy. A patriotic policy guaranteed Stolypin the support of the Russian nationalists, as well as the opposition of the left and the hatred of the national minorities. Foreign policy, directed by Izvol'skii, aimed at external peace to ensure internal reforms.

The high command of the armed forces was reorganized, too. The army was administered by the war ministry, led by General Roediger. But the general staff under General Palicyn was made independent, on the German model. A naval general staff was established, but much was left to be reformed later in the naval administration. A Committee of Imperial Defence was created under the presidency of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevič to unite the various military and naval offices. From that ensued the advantage that the Grand Duke, designated wartime commander-in-chief, grew acquainted with the planning and preparation for the war that he was expected to lead. But it seems that the system did not work well; the

services were not successfully integrated. In 1909 the military command was again centred in the war ministry under Suhomlinov, the new minister. Nikolaï Nikolaevič served further as a commander of the Guards and of the St. Petersburg military district, always as the designated commander-in-chief. Nicholas II nursed a secret wish of taking the command himself. He was persuaded to give up this dream in 1914, but in 1915 he dismissed his uncle and took command, with no propitious consequences for the dynasty or empire.

In the summer of 1905 Germany tried to take advantage of Russia's weakness and break up the recent entente of France and England. The Kaiser visited Tangier and thereby demonstrated Germany's interest in Morocco. Delcassé would have opposed the German demands, trusting to British support, but the French government was scared of Germany and let Delcassé fall. An international conference was set up to disentangle the Moroccan question.

The Kaiser used France's compliance as a proof that the time for concluding the continental coalition against England had come. Nicholas was irritated because of England's renewed relations with Japan and signed. But the Russian statesmen, Witte and Lamsdorf, explained that an alliance with Germany could not be reconciled with the Dual Alliance without France's previous concert.

And France did not consent. Against German expectation, England firmly supported the French monopoly in Morocco. Russia, too, had to support her ally at the conference because she needed a giant loan to revive her finances after war and revolution, and only France was able to furnish the money. The Dual Alliance thus survived this crisis.

In order to avoid further complications on the Asian confines, Russia renounced her dreams of conquest and made an entente with England in 1907. She gave up Tibet, left Afghanistan in England's sphere of interest, and consented to carving up Persia into zones of interest. England gave unwritten, uncertain promises of support in the Straits question.

At the same time the rivalry with Japan was buried. And in 1910 a hesitating first step towards a renewed imperialism in the Far East was taken when a Russo-Japanese agreement was made, which left Korea in Japan's and Mongolia in Russia's

sphere of interest.

In 1907 Izvol'skiĭ tried to soothe German susceptibilities with a proposal for closing the Baltic Sea against English influence.¹⁸⁵

By the end of 1907 Izvol'skiĭ had disentangled Russia from the mess that her Asian aspirations had led her into. The external peace necessary for the internal reforms seemed to be assured.

4.5. Powerless Russia

Defeat and revolution made Russia militarily powerless. When the Moroccan crisis was at its worst, the new Russian chief of general staff Palicyn declared that three years would be needed from the end of the war to rebuild Russia's military might in the west. She was not in a position to furnish any appreciable support in the event of a war between Germany and France.

"Our magazines in Poland are empty, we have no projectiles for our cannons. If we have a conflict with Germany, there is nothing else to do but to kneel down and beg for mercy".¹⁸⁶

The end of the Far Eastern war did not make things much easier for Russia:

"She has to face a new military situation in the Far East. Her troops have to be reorganized in Asia, in Turkestan, in western and eastern Siberia, in order to be able to withstand the renewed Anglo-Japanese alliance... Palicyn will not renounce adventurism in Asia nor does he concentrate on reconstituting the military position on the European frontier, where complications may appear at any moment.

¹⁸⁵ Pertti Luntinen, *The Baltic Question 1903—1908*, Suomalaisen Tiedekatemian toimituksia B 195, Helsinki 1975, deals with Russo-German relations during this time.

¹⁸⁶ "Situation de l'armée russe dans l'hypothèse d'un conflit avec l'Allemagne". Moulin 27.VI 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

The Council of Imperial Defence, realizing the Emperor William's dreams, is hypnotized by Asia and seeks for a combination that would enable Russia to face the Japanese in eastern Siberia and the English on the borders of Afghanistan and India".

Palicyn said to Moulin:

"Our situation in Asia is very bad . . . The Anglo-Japanese treaty cannot leave us cold . . . this treaty is an infamy".

And, what was worse, Palicyn was taken in by the German emperor's plan of a continental coalition against the island naval powers:

"William II is a man who sees the problem from a high and broad point of view . . ."

Moulin said that the subject was a bit frightening one for a mere military attaché to get involved with, but he had let Palicyn talk in order to learn whether Germany had proposed something to the Russian general staff. "Palicyn is such a wily Jesuit father . . ."¹⁸⁷

The continental coalition was of course no chimaera; there were plenty of grounds for such a combination. The alliances of the First World War were in no way preordained, but were the result of a long series of events. The French had good reason to be worried about the support for a German orientation in conservative and military circles in Russia, where there was much opposition to Izvol'skiï's new course. Nor was the Moroccan crisis the last instance when such currents seemed to determine the direction of Russian policy.

A flicker of hope of a military rebirth could be seen by December 1905 when the Tsar had promised constitutional reform and the Moscow rebellion had been put down. Russian securities rose on the Paris market after the news of "the excellent conduct" of the Guards regiment in Moscow.¹⁸⁸ But this was only a flicker. Repatriating the troops from Manchuria took a long time. The militia battalions of the Moscow, St.

¹⁸⁷ Moulin to war minister 25.X 1905. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 37. DDF VIII/2 n:o 81

¹⁸⁸ "Sur le loyalisme de l'armée". Moulin 27.X 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

Petersburg, and Kiev districts were the first to be sent home, as well as the Cossacks. These were needed for reasons of internal security. No thought was given to the western border. In addition, the rebellion of the Manchurian army delayed its repatriation and military reorganization.

"At the moment, a detachment commanded by General Meller-Zakomelskii, starting from Omsk, has succeeded in re-establishing order on the railway up to Krasnojarsk and is continuing towards Irkutsk. Another detachment, under General Rennenkampf is moving in the opposite direction, towards Irkutsk, occupying station after station."

Thus, at least a year was to elapse before the repatriation could be completed. And even then about 300 000 men were to be left in Siberia on a war footing.¹⁸⁹ By the end of the year 1906 the number of troops stationed in Siberia was reported to be 200 000.¹⁹⁰

The instruction and training of troops suffered considerably from policing services they had to perform. Keeping order absorbed a great number of detachments every day during the revolutionary years from 1905—1907.¹⁹¹

Moulin estimated that the great mass of the Russian army was untouched by the mutinies and remained loyal, prepared to defend the established order; it would triumph over the forces of anarchy. In the event, for instance, of a conflict between the government and the Duma, the technical regiments might turn out to be unreliable. The engineers, the machine gun corps, the artillery, and the automobile companies had comparatively many factory workers in their ranks and their officers were more leftist than the mass of infantry and cavalry officers.¹⁹²

In fact the conflict with the Duma did not lead to civil war,

¹⁸⁹ "Au sujet des troupes russes de Pologne et du rapatriement de l'armée de Mandchourie". Moulin 27.I 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁹⁰ "Sur les effectifs maintenus en Extrême Orient". Moulin 18.XII 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁹¹ "Au sujet des mauvaises conditions d'instruction des troupes". Moulin 12.XII 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁹² "Sur l'état d'esprit de l'armée russe". Moulin 10.VI 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

but there were many painful incidents. For instance, some detachments of the Preobraženskii Guard refused to obey order: "no tradition was able to prevail against the spirit of indiscipline" although the emperor himself was the colonel of the regiment.

The generals also blamed the influence of the grand dukes who had commanded the regiment and had spoiled it.¹⁹³ These grand dukes, highly ignorant both politically and militarily, poorly endowed with intellect and character, constituted one of the most nefarious elements in the Russian army:

"generally a disastrous race, always parasites, sometimes harmful parasites... Grand Admiral Alekseĭ Aleksandrovič has wasted the navy; under Nikolaĭ Nikolaevič the Elder (commander-in-chief 1877—1878) theft achieved inordinate proportions and fabulous sums; Nikolaĭ Nikolaevič the Younger (commander-in-chief designate) is surrounded by a coterie of occultists, which has a harmful effect on his nervous system".¹⁹⁴

And Nicholas II loved to listen to bad advice, e.g. when the grand dukes incited him to dissolve the first Duma.¹⁹⁵ (Of course, this kind of thinking appealed to an observer from Western Europe; from the government's point of view, there was no other alternative short of surrendering the power to the rebellious Duma).

The critical views expressed to Moulin about the grand dukes were those of General Dragomirov. But it seems that the younger officers judged the generals in their turn equally severely. Natural or acquired protection and seniority was the basis of a successful career in the army. Able, independent commanders capable of taking the initiative were deemed turbulent and vain, while careerists without principles but with a calculating self-interest and a flair for flattery were promoted generals because they were deemed "intelligent and tactful

¹⁹³ "Propaganda politique dans l'armée". Moulin 28.VI 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁹⁴ Moulin to war minister 20.XI 1906, discussion with General Dragomirov. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁹⁵ "Esprit de l'armée". Moulin 25.VII 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

men". There were three roads for advancement: the Guards, the general staff, and the court. Thus the commanders were schooled in modish restaurants, in the offices of the St. Petersburg military district, and in the anterooms of the Palace.¹⁹⁶ In 1909 Roediger criticized severely the mediocrity of the generals, and the ensuing reaction was all-too typical: he was accused of insulting the army and patriotic feelings,¹⁹⁷ and he was relieved from his appointment. When, in the same year 1909, an inquiry into corruption was ordered, "a great sorrow reigns in naval circles, where the number of uncorrupted persons is not great".¹⁹⁸

The officer corps was reported to be discouraged as a result of the defeat in the Manchurian War, but especially also because of a disturbed feeling about whether the incorrigibles and the sovereign had really learned their lesson. They were seen to be encrusted and imbued with prejudice. The ordinary people, too, were felt to be lacking in patriotism, or their patriotism at its best was to be considered only xenophobia. There were chauvinists among the officers and civil servants, but most people served the state only for gain for the occasions it provided for peculation. The best way of advancement was submissiveness, base flattery, and complicity. The emperor, who incarnated the Russian fatherland, was seen only as a machine for signing the lists of rewards.¹⁹⁹

But as a reaction to these circumstances many officers started on an energetic course of self-improvement — although it was frowned on by the higher circles — and professional journals were written and read, and military questions were discussed by these groups.²⁰⁰ Although the fundamental ills of the Tsarist system could not be healed by a few studious officers, remarkable progress in the Russian army began to be made before the great war. Among the ordinary ranks revolutionary discontent abated:

"The army corps commanders agree that the new

¹⁹⁶ "Du haute commandement". Moulin 16.XII 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

¹⁹⁷ "Revue de la presse 11/24.III 1909" AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 18

¹⁹⁸ "Revue de la presse 21.I/3.II 1909". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 18

¹⁹⁹ "Découragement dans le corps des officiers". Moulin 22.XI 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

²⁰⁰ = ¹⁹⁹

class of recruits is animated by a better spirit and is more docile than the previous one”

Moulin was already reporting by the end of 1906.²⁰¹

But innumerable problems of reconstruction and mutual relations were to be solved before the Dual Alliance was able to play its intended role again.

4.6. National Minority Problems in the Military Reconstruction

The western border regions caused additional military worry for Russia and the Dual Alliance from 1905 onwards. During the revolutionary disorders and constitutional hopes of the autumn of 1905 there was turbulence also in Poland, and some talk of Polish autonomy. There was also some agitation in Galicia and Posen. The French military attaché was somewhat worried lest Germany, Austria, and Russia were to subdue an eventual Polish rebellion together. This complicity might give an additional impetus towards better relations between the three empires. On the other hand, if Russia was to give autonomy to Poland, there was the danger of a violent German reaction and even a risk of France getting involved in a war against Germany in alliance with the powerless Russia.

Even if a war was avoided, an autonomous Poland would cause military problems. It was problematic whether an autonomous Poland would allow the conscripting the Polish contingent into the Russian army, whether she would consent to building and using the strategic railways, and whether she would bear the military-financial burdens hitherto imposed, and whether she would consent to requisitions. Russian troops in Poland would be even more strangers there than ever before. There was also the danger of such dreams of autonomy extending to Lithuania and the Ukraine.

²⁰¹ "Sur l'esprit de l'armée". Moulin 23.XII 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

Palicyn reassured Moulin that there was no danger. The general staff believed firmly that Poland would not be promised anything. All Polish aspirations would be energetically rebuffed by the Duma. Russia was one and indivisible.²⁰² Palicyn also assured Moulin that the Polish reservists, who were to be drafted to make up the Russian detachments in Poland in the event of a mobilization, were completely dependable. Their morale would be excellent if they had to fight the Germans, because they had ancient quarrels with Prussia. They understood that Poland was prospering because of the Russian customs barrier against Germany.

"The government counts absolutely on the loyalty of the Poles in case of a war against Germany."²⁰³

Later on we shall see that the more recent grievances with Russia could not be totally ignored.

There existed also a confused situation in the Baltic provinces. There were grave disorders there. With

"a special logic the Estonian rebellious sailors had been transferred to disciplinary battalions which were sent against the insurgents in the Baltic provinces."²⁰⁴

From the French point of view it was extremely desirable to have these provinces pacified. They had for a long time been the object of Pan-Germanic dreams. The local Germans admired the *Reich*, they had the portrait of William hanging side by side with Nicholas II's picture. The discord of the local peasantry with the Germans eased the task of the Russian administration, but caused difficulties, too. Satisfying the poorer population implied upsetting the friends of Germany; on the other hand preserving the rights of the Germans meant leaving the population to the tender mercy of their landlords. This would lead to new disturbances and then to renewed

²⁰² Moulin to war minister 28.XI 1905. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 37, DDF VIII/2 n:o 168

²⁰³ "Sur l'incorporation des réservistes polonais". Moulin 10.XI 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477

"Au sujet des troupes russes en Pologne et du rapatriement de l'armée de Mandchourie". Moulin 27.I 1906 EMATSH 7 N 1477

²⁰⁴ "Sur le loyalisme de l'armée". Moulin 27.X 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

intrigues from the Pan-Germans. In either situation, the door was open for the intrigues of William II.

Russia was left without a fleet. An insurrection in the coastal provinces would prevent the transport of troops for defending the coasts. Local autonomy would equally paralyse the communications and favour the enemy. Thus there existed the danger of a German landing and occupation of Russian territory, which was a grave threat to the capital and the communications of the army. And Russia had no means of forestalling the enemy.²⁰⁵

The opposition provoked by Bobrikov's policy had arisen in Finland simultaneously with the Russian revolution in the autumn of 1905. It had taken the form of a general strike, which paralyzed the communications of the Russian rifle battalions in the Grand Duchy. To avoid an anti-Russian rebellion and a social revolution Prince Obolenskiï, the governor-general, had promised the restoration of Finnish autonomy and an extremely democratic national representation (a parliament of one chamber, universal suffrage regardless of sex). The new Finnish Senate (government) tried to restore also the separate Finnish army instead of the temporary military tax. But naturally — in the light of what has been said above of Poland and the Baltic provinces — the rebellious Finns were not given their army. Instead, they were forced to continue paying the military tax, which would increase annually to twenty million marks by 1920. Finnish protests in this as in other constitutional disputes caused St. Petersburg to Russify the Finnish Senate and the higher administration. The lower administration could not be Russified because the Russian officials were not able to speak Finnish and the Finns would not learn Russian. The military authorities and the government were afraid of an eventual Finnish armed opposition, which had been thought of but was not realized. The Russian gendarmes cooked up stories of a gigantic secret organization, smuggling of weapons, and plans for a rebellious war. A third rifle brigade was established in Finland in 1908 to prop up the

²⁰⁵ "Situation des provinces baltiques au point de vue militaire". Moulin 8.XII 1905. EMATSH 7 N 1477

Russian occupation, and plans for a military intervention were prepared.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Pertti Luntinen. Suomi Pietarin suojana ja uhkana venäläisten sotasuunnitelmissa 1854—1914. *Historiallinen Arkisto* 79/1983
Pertti Luntinen, *Venäläisten sotasuunnitelmat Suomen separatismia vastaan*. Tampereen yliopisto, Historiatieteen laitoksen julkaisuja 11. p. 46

5. A Slow and Devious Reconstruction

5.1. Cold Comfort for France

At the beginning of 1906 Palicyn took up the question of continuing the annual discussions of the French and Russian chiefs of staff.

Palicyn explained that he did not believe in any aggressive German plans against France; she only wanted to approach her and to detach her from England. An entente with England would only make France a tool of British policy, which could arouse no sympathy in Russia.

And after her experience in the Japanese war, Russia was not able to understand why France was staking her honour on a mere colonial question (Morocco was to be discussed at Algeciras). Palicyn explained that it was not in the power of any Russian government to impose any kind of war on the Russian people. They were absolutely disgusted by such things.²⁰⁷

Palicyn's intention is clear. He did not like France's entente with Russia's old enemy, and he was warning her that no Russian support might be expected if the Moroccan crisis resulted in war. Instead, he recommended the formation of a continental coalition. In fact, the army was one of the principal

²⁰⁷ Moulin to war minister 27.I. 1906. EMATSH 7 N 1477. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 38

obstacles on Izvolskii's road to the entente of 1907 with England and Japan.

Nevertheless, Palicyn wanted to continue the discussions with his French colleague and to clear up the problem of wartime communication between them. Moulin remarked that for France the principal question was that Russia would engage as many Germans as possible. "This point had not struck Palicyn much — there is plenty to be taught to him" was Moulin's comment.

Moulin admitted that it was clear that Russia would not be able to give the help she had promised to give. But he recommended engaging in discussion, because it was important not to do anything which might *de jure* shake the Russian engagement. And it was important also to help Russia to reconstruct her army as fast as possible, so that she should not be able to hide behind a *non possumus* in case her help were needed.

The military attaché calculated that Russia would need at least three years to organize her mobilization, troop concentration plans, artillery, and fortifications. If all went well, something might be hoped for by the spring of 1909. In the current year, 1906, Russia was not able to wage war even against Austria alone. Such a war would be possible only if Germany were engaged elsewhere and internal disorder paralysed Austria (and the Pan-Slavists had promised such a disorder in two to four months where necessary!) In 1907—1908 Russia might be able to oppose Austria; or if Austria should be paralysed, Russia could engage some German troops, but she would not be able to carry the offensive into German territory. By this time there were five army corps with 200 000 men still in Manchuria. Ten army corps were in position in the Vilna, Warsaw, and Kiev district, with an estimated theoretical strength of half a million men if mobilized,²⁰⁸ but, as Palicyn had remarked, lacking armaments, organization, matériel, and

²⁰⁸ By this time the Russian mobilized strength was estimated to amount to
160 000 men in the Vilna military district, i.e. II, III, and XX corps
245 000 Warsaw V, VI, XIV XV corps
140 000 Kiev XI, XII, XXI corps
200 000 returning from Manchuria, IV, IX, X, XVI, XIX
Moscow, Odessa, Kazan omitted as well as the Asian military districts.

fortifications.

Palicyn calculated that the critical period for the Russian army was going to last at least three and a half years. Her armaments had to be modernized, but in addition the officers, especially the high command, had to be rejuvenated and the morale of the army had to be raised.

Palicyn declared that he welcomed the chance of a discussion with his French colleague. But, unlike his predecessor, he was not going to promise something that he was not able to keep. — Thus the promises of Saharov were annulled.

Palicyn was starting work on the mobilization plan, which was going to take one year. But already it was evident that the mobilization was going to last from one to four weeks longer than estimated previously.

"It was a pity that he had to confess the mistakes of his predecessors".²⁰⁹

After these unpromising preliminaries Palicyn saw his French colleague in April 1906. First of all they agreed that in case of a war the Germans would probably concentrate their principal effort against France, but the inverse hypothesis could not be totally excluded. In any case the French were going to attack immediately. Palicyn promised never to lose sight of the fact that the defeat of the German army was the principal strategic aim, in regard to which he would concentrate all available resources. But he could not fix the time or the zone of the Russian concentration or the consequent action, which would also partly be influenced by the action of the adversary.

The Russian chief of staff was happy to be able to say that the army had suffered less than expected in the Manchurian war. At present it could be mobilized, although with a considerable delay. By the end of July all troops would be repatriated, and in a year all cadres would be reconstructed, their mobilization reorganized and their training started. The detachments would be able to fight as solid combat units, although they would not yet possess all the accessories that were necessary to make them what the Germans called *operationsfähig*.

²⁰⁹ Moulin to war minister 21.II 1906. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 38

The chiefs of staff also reviewed the article concerning an eventual German attempt to conquer the German provinces of Austria in case of the Hapsburg empire dissolved; but they stated there was nothing to add to it. Apparently they were not worried about Francis Joseph's health any more.

But discord arose when Palicyn asked whether he could count on France executing the measures agreed on in the previous meetings in the event of a war against England. He "attached a great importance to a positive answer to this question" — which was natural because of the anti-British feeling then rife in Russia. Of course he did not receive a positive answer, since the Franco-English entente was a fact. Palicyn was answered that the measures referred to could be executed only if ratified in a convention between the two governments, and no such convention had come to the knowledge of the French general staff.²¹⁰

Russia's Asian problems were not touched on during this discussion, but in the autumn Palicyn told Moulin that many Russian officers thought that a new war with Japan was to be expected in three or four years. Japan might be supported by China, whose progress Russia observed with a great anxiety. Thus a great amount of money, men, and materials had to be concentrated in the Far East, which was possible if a policy of appeasement was pursued towards Germany. It was true that even more probable was a Japanese attack on French Indochina, which would be a more profitable conquest than the Russian possessions in the Far East.

"The danger would be exceptionally great if Japan was given the giant loan she applying for".²¹¹

Moulin explained that Palicyn was probably only warning France against granting the loan Japan was applying for.

It is well known that France and England withheld their money until Japan had consented to the 1907 entente. Thus the Japanese danger disappeared.

²¹⁰ "Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 3/21 avril 1906 entre les chefs d'état-majors généraux des armées russe et française". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 38. DDF X/2 n:o 119

²¹¹ Moulin to war minister 10.XI 1906. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 38. DDF X/2 n:o 270

Moulin also prepared for the next meeting of the chiefs of staff. He asked Palicyn whether it might this time be possible to insist on a point in the convention that had not been cleared up in the previous meeting, i.e. fixing the approximate moment when Russia would be able to send her contingent into action with the effectives and mode of action that were envisaged in the protocols of 1901—1902—1903. Palicyn, "usually very shifty", this time very decidedly refused to promise any offensive against Germany in the beginning of the war.

Palicyn explained that the Russian army had neither the staying-power nor the tactical training indispensable for an offensive. The necessary technical and material equipment also exceeded her financial capacity. And an attack against Germany presupposed an incontestable superiority on the Austrian front, which did not exist. Strong detachments had to be kept in Caucasia in case of an eventual insurrection; Romania had to be watched by a considerable force; and in Finland there was the danger of a popular rising which Sweden was actually fomenting. An attack with limited forces from Poland to East Prussia would be useless in the absence of support by the Baltic fleet, which did not exist any more.

The Russo-French convention aimed at splitting the German army in the beginning of the war. Palicyn said that this aim could be attained also by a Russian threat against the Austrian frontier. Germany would not leave her ally in the lurch; she would be compelled to leave four army corps in the east.

Of course, Moulin could no be comforted. He commented that in his soul of souls Palicyn would dearly love to see even these four corps depart to the west to fight against France.

Nor was Palicyn quite sure about French intentions. Wasn't her offensive power lessened in consequence of the two-year service? (After the Radicals had come to power in the aftermath of the Dreyfus affair, they nearly destroyed the morale, discipline, training, and armaments of the French army, which they suspected of anti-republican feelings. The shortened two-year service was part of this policy, which aimed at substituting a militia for the professional army).²¹²

²¹² Douglas Porch, *The March to the Marne. The French Army 1871—1914.* Cambridge University Press 1981

And why should the French attack at the very beginning? Couldn't they wait for the German attack behind their fortifications? Would they really attack if the Germans should turn to the east — hadn't they promised only to prepare for an immediate attack?²¹³

This discussion, even if "frank and free" cannot have been very friendly. Palicyn did not promise anything, and Austria again became Russia's principal enemy.

Next summer, 1907, the meeting of Palicyn with the French General Ladebatt went a little better. They agreed that united action was a guarantee of success. Some preparations against Germany had already been undertaken by the Russian army. A few batteries which were to act on the German frontier were already equipped with new guns, and others were being similarly armed. Ammunition and other matériel was being supplied. A plan to increase the effectiveness of railways had been submitted to the Council of Ministers. The realization of the plan would speed up the mobilization many days.

But there remained a time-gap between the moment the French and German armies were mobilized and concentrated, and the day the Russian contingent would be ready to march with sufficient force to permit of really useful results. Palicyn proposed that the French general staff should take this fact into consideration in planning for the decisive engagement with the enemy. He repeated his doubt as to whether it was really necessary to attack at once. Ladebatt only answered that the difference would cause difficulties for France and that he hoped that Russia's concentration could be speeded up.²¹⁴ (Douglas Porch is of the opinion that the French attitude of reckless attack was an escape forward, born out of a feeling of inferiority to the enemy. The German superiority in numbers, matériel, organization, and tactics could not be answered with anything else but the revolutionary élan of -92.)²¹⁵

Palicyn also explained that it was of the utmost importance

²¹³ Moulin to war minister 9.VII 1907. AMAE, C.P. Russie, N.S. 38. DDF XI/2 n:o 68

²¹⁴ "Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 31/18 juillet 1907 entre les chefs d'état-major généraux des armées Russe et Française". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 38. DDF XI/2 n:o 116

²¹⁵ Porch, *The March to the Marne*, p. 213—

to know the direction of the main German attack — to the west or the east — before deciding on the Russian troop concentrations. Russia had to receive the information at the latest by the end of the first week. The Italian attitude was of importance, too. If Austria were not able to trust Italy, her threat against Russia would be essentially weakened, and consequently Russia would be able to act with more spirit against Germany. Thus also the problem of wartime communication between France and Russia was of first importance.²¹⁶

Next year, 1908, Palicyn explained to Moulin that he was preparing a new plan of concentration. There was to be real progress from the plan of 1901. The troops would be better divided into groups, their detrainment was to be faster, the Polish fortresses were to be better manned, their weapons more numerous, and the left bank of the Vistula was not to be stripped of troops as before.²¹⁷

Palicyn stated that on the fifteenth day eleven or twelve corps would be concentrated on the frontier, and all troops would be detrained on the twenty-fifth day. But still it was "difficult" for him to say when the troops would be *operationsfähig*: it depended on what operations were aimed at. An attack from the Niemen towards East Prussia could be launched rather soon, but there was the fortified lake district in front of it, and therefore no speedy result could be expected from this attack. An attack from the Narew to Allenstein was as little promising as the previous one. The only direction where the Germans could be seriously disturbed was from Warsaw in the direction of Berlin. But the Russians could not emerge from their bridgeheads on the Vistula before inflicting a serious check on the Austrian army, which was concentrated to attack the communications of the Russian army on the left bank of the Vistula. Yet it was difficult to come to grips with the Austrians. Because the enemy was able to concentrate earlier, the Russians had to be concentrated far from the frontier in order to be safe. If she could maintain a sufficient superiority over the Austrians, Russia might be content to

²¹⁶ "Procès-verbal . . ." = 214

²¹⁷ "Conversation du Général Moulin avec le Général Palitzyne Septembre 1908". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 39. DDF IX/2, n:o 442

watch them without attacking. But this was possible only if Italy should engage a substantial part of Austria's forces. This eventuality was not certain at all.

The Russian general staff hoped that on the tenth day they would have definite information of the German division of forces between the eastern and the western frontier. After that it would be possible to direct the Russian army corps to their areas of concentration. It was possible to start an attack against six to seven German corps on the fifteenth day, but its direction and the objective of the attack could be decided only after having received definite information on the German plans.

Thus, even if his tone was more hopeful and forthcoming, Palicyn heaped up reasons for why he was not able to promise the early attack that the French saw as their only hope of success in the expected battle. To keep the discussion friendly Palicyn proposed that the French general staff should imagine they were in his position and make a plan for Russian action. "He would study it with great interest and present the objections which the French general staff had not been able to foresee". He had a plan for the French, too. He would let the Germans run into the French frontier fortresses, after which the French army could start its operations from its bases behind the fortress line. Such plans were only of academic interest, but they would elucidate the problems involved, instead of staying simply with a *non possumus*.²¹⁸

Palicyn next met his French colleague in September 1908. After Moulin's previous discussion with the Russian general there was not much to be said. Nevertheless the protocol drawn up during this meeting was an attempt to pressurize and came close to being an accusation against the Russians. The grave question of the Russian attack could not be resolved, because the general staffs lacked means of communication. "The French general staff was unable to understand" that a question that had been studied for so long had not been advanced in Russia. The French also mentioned the completing of the Bologoe-Sedlec line in an equally demanding tone. (The line had been opened in 1906, but nearly half of it remained without a second

218 = 217

track). They now emphatically demanded that the Russian government should speed up as much as possible the work on it.²¹⁹

From all this it is easy to conclude that Russia's weakness and France's position as a creditor made possible France's imperious behaviour and that Russia was sinking from the status of an ally towards semicolonial dependence.²²⁰

Of course, it is true that Russia needed France's financial and material help. But on the other hand, we have noted France's desperate need for Russia's military support. Too much must not be concluded from this protocol, either. Palicyn had asked for the French pressure against his own government. He had said to Moulin that a French demand for wireless telegraphy between the general staffs would help him to overcome the objections made by the Board of Engineers. "Their reasons are various, mainly all kinds of corruption", he confided to Moulin. He asked for a similar manifestation of pressure to help him to obtain appropriations for the Sedlec-Bologoe railway. Such pressure had to be exerted against the Ministry of Finance, which was very reluctant to part with the money.²²¹

Palicyn's request is, after all, not very much surprising, if the idiosyncrasies of the imperial government are kept in mind. It was a symptom of the lack of cohesion in the Russian state that foreign military colleagues were trusted more than the compatriot civilian colleagues.

A couple of years earlier Palicyn had asked the reluctant French for support against the English. By now Russia herself had concluded an entente with England. Izvol'skiĭ wanted to free the military convention from its previous anti-English content. He asked the chiefs of staff to study the problems of an eventual German mobilization against England. The generals stated that a German mobilization, even a partial mobilization against a third power, was a serious danger to France and Russia. Consequently, the convention was to be applied "with

²¹⁹ "Procès-verbal de l'entretien de 24/11 septembre 1908 entre les chefs d'état-major généraux des armées russe et française". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 39. DDF XI/2 n:o 455

²²⁰ e.g. Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny*, p. 176: "Russia was interrogated on her readiness . . ."

²²¹ = ²¹⁷

all vigour", i.e. the Dual Alliance would also mobilize. And mobilization implied starting a war. This could be avoided only if Germany gave sufficient guarantees of her intentions.²²²

In addition to the western frontier the Turkish danger, too, was kept in mind. Moulin had received the following information from Tiflis: the military there counted that they would have 250 000 Turks concentrated against them on the Caucasian frontier. As far as the Black Sea theatre was concerned, it was assumed that a military convention existed between Russia and Bulgaria. "A number of corps" (probably the seventh and eighth) were to be shipped from Odessa and Sevastopol to Varna. Moulin said that Palicyn had made an allusion to this combination. But he did not seem to have any faith in the alternative operation, the descent on the coast of the Bosphorus, "which I have always held to be rather chimaeric", although the general staff had been making plans for it for many years.²²³

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The peacetime garrison areas of the various army corps can be seen on the attached map (map 20). The next sketch was drawn by the military attaché according to the information he had received of the planned mobilization and troop concentration (map 21). It tallies rather well with Zaiončkovskii's map (map 22), except that the vanguard and reserve of the Warsaw and Vilna armies were not separated by Moulin. Of course, the Moscow army was not to remain in Moscow where Moulin has positioned it, corresponding to the situation on the eighteenth day.

5.2. Russia Retreats from the West

By 1903 the Russians had realized that if they were to transport an important part of their army to the Far East,

²²² "Procès-verbal . . ." = 219

²²³ "Extrait d'un rapport du CI Moulin 2.VIII 1908". AMAE C.P. Russie N.S.

there would be insufficient troops left to attack Germany or even to meet a German attack. That was why a plan had been made to draw back Russian troop concentrations hundreds of versts. There the army could have been mobilized and concentrated in all security, while the Germans exhausted themselves in the endless approaches through Russia's western provinces — the strategy resembled that of the year 1812. (map 23) The Emperor Nicholas II had supported this plan, which harmonized very well with the wishes of the German Kaiser. His army would have been able to deal with the French army without any threat from the east. Kuropatkin had subsequently succeeded in proving to the Tsar that the plan was incompatible with Russia's obligations under the Dual Alliance. It seems that the French never learned of the existence of such a plan. But it re-emerged after the Japanese war.

The defeat in the Far East had shaken rather badly the confidence of the Russian general staff in their army. German superiority worried them much more than Palicyn admitted to Moulin or the French chiefs of staff, even if his reluctance to attack was clearly seen. A reform of the army organization was prepared by the general staff and the war ministry, and it was combined with a plan of retreating from the west. But before all this occurred, new men were appointed to the command posts of the army in 1909.

The independent general staff was again made part of the ministry, and the Committee of Imperial Defence was abolished. Suhomlinov, Dragomirov's former chief of staff in Kiev, was appointed to the post of war minister, in overall command of the military establishment as Miljutin, Vannovskii, and Kuropatkin had been. Nikolaï Nikolaevič remained commander of the Guards and of the St. Petersburg military district, resentful because of having been eclipsed by Suhomlinov.

The reform of the army organization was then completed. The organization was much simplified by the abolition of the various cadres for reserve and fortress troops. The active army corps were henceforth also to mobilize the reserve and militia formations. No troops were to remain second-line or local. That is how the number of active divisions and army corps was increased, while the over-all costs for the upkeep of the army were reduced. A territorial system of recruiting and mobilizing

the army was adopted, i.e. the army corps were garrisoned in the regions where their conscripts and reservists lived. (The garrison areas can be seen on the attached sketch map 24).

Thus the fifth and sixteenth army corps were moved from Poland to eastern Russia; a new corps, the twenty-third, was organized in Poland; the military district of Warsaw consequently lost one corps. Two further corps, the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth were established in Moscow and Ufa, on the western slope of the Urals. The third Caucasian army corps was garrisoned on the northern side of the mountains. On the Asian side of the Urals the fourth and fifth Siberian corps were organized. — Finland got her third rifle brigade. At one time the twenty-third corps was reported to have been in eastern Finland, but that must have been only a plan in case of a rebellion there.²²⁴

The new territorial organization made possible a faster mobilization of the army corps. Infantry and artillery could be mobilized on the fourth day (reinforced corps near the frontier) or seventh day (not reinforced corps in the frontier districts) or on the tenth day (in the interior military districts). Reserve troops could be mobilized on the thirteenth day. Cavalry was to be ready between the third to seventh days and reserve cavalry (the second and third call-up Cossacks) between eleventh to sixteenth days. Great magazines were prepared in Warsaw, Brest, and Sedlec. Requisitions were planned from Poland.²²⁵

The plan of 1903 was adopted as the basis of the troop concentration plans. It was supposed that the Germans would attack with great force before Russia was ready, and therefore troop concentrations were to be withdrawn from Poland towards the east. Thus the army could prepare itself with all necessary deliberation in the interior of the empire, protected by the empty frontier provinces against German surprises, and without any danger of being surrounded in the Polish salient. (map 25). Thereafter the army was to act "according to circumstances". — At this point of his study Zaiončkovskiĭ could not help angrily blaming Suhomlinov and his chief

²²⁴ "Modifications á l'emplacement, Septembre 1910". EMATSH 7 N 1537

²²⁵ "Attaché militaire, Mars 1910, Renseignements sur la mobilisation". EMATSH 7 N 1535

planner Danilov for timidity and leaving the initiative, as well as many provinces, to the enemy.²²⁶

Simultaneously with Suhomlinov's reforms a reorientation in Russia's foreign policy also seemed to be occurring. After his success in 1907 Izvol'skiĭ had stumbled into difficulties in the Balkans. Austria's ambitious foreign minister Aehrenthal had started a forward policy southwards, speeded up by the Young Turk revolution during the summer of 1908 which threatened to disturb the status quo. Izvol'skiĭ, painfully aware of Russia's inability to prevent the Austrian moves, tried to reach an agreement with the rival for carving up the Orient into spheres of interest: Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria, the Straits to Russia. Aehrenthal immediately annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, which Austria had occupied since 1878, but did not help Russia to her share. France was not at all interested in seeing the Straits in the hands of her ally, and England wanted them opened for all, which was not what Russia desired — she wanted them for herself. At home Izvol'skiĭ was accused of selling cheaply the brother Slavs in the annexed provinces; and the Serbian chauvinists were also enraged. Izvol'skiĭ proposed a conference to save appearances, but Austria demanded that the annexation should be accepted unconditionally, and Germany supported her ally with a message that could be regarded as an ultimatum. Roediger, the minister for war, declared that Russia had no capacity at all for waging war. Izvol'skiĭ had to desist from further protests and Russia had to make Serbia abandon her demands for compensation. To the Russian chauvinists, this was a diplomatic Tsushima.

Stolypin replaced the irritable Izvol'skiĭ with the more docile Sazonov, and a new approach was tried in Russian foreign policy: if Germany was the menace, she must be appeased. The emperors William II and Nicholas II met at Potsdam in 1910, accompanied by their ministers Kiderlen-Wächter and Sazonov. Toasts for mutual good-will caused Kiderlen to propose Sazonov a treaty of non-aggression. Sazonov declined, because it would have annulled the Dual Alliance — which was Kiderlen's intention, of course. The policy of appeasement very nearly fell through with this refusal and the consequent news-

²²⁶ Zaiončkovskiĭ, *Plany voĭny*, p. 183—

paper polemics. But then in August 1911 Russo-German relations were patched up by an agreement on the Baghdad railway and Persia, where the Germans had intruded into the Russian sphere of interest. This colonial entente could not replace the unrealized general treaty, but for a while Russo-German relations were much better than they had been during the previous years.

5.3. The French Are Worried

Simultaneously with these grand political events, Russian plans were screened from the French view. Louis Moulin, who had arrived in St. Petersburg as a young captain in 1880, died in the autumn of 1908, after twenty-eight years' service as military attaché. He had been promoted major, lieutenant-colonel, colonel, and major-general, notwithstanding the fact that he had no experience in the command of field troops; his promotions were due to his extraordinary service in Russia. He had succeeded in creating good relations with the Russian army command, and had been instrumental in the creation and maintenance of the military alliance of Russia with France. His successors, Matton (whom we have met earlier), who was attaché from 1908—1912, and Laguiche, who served from 1912—1919, had a hard task in preserving Moulin's heritage. The quality and quantity of information was bound to fall after his death, and it could be built up only gradually. The situation was especially serious because of Suhomlinov's reforms, of which only rumours and indications reached Paris, as well as because of the supposed new course in Russian foreign policy.

The French general staff were anxious. They remembered that in 1906 Palicyn had proposed the appeasement of Germany by Russia and France, and in 1907 he had adopted a purely defensive attitude in his plans for the beginning of the war. He had refused even to prepare for an offensive against Germany on the pretext of the Austrian danger. And in 1908 the work on the Polish fortifications had ceased.

"Either because of incapacity, lack of organization,

or intentionally, Russia has not taken any effective means of defence in Poland, where the mobilization is difficult and slow."

The French generals admitted the necessity of the new system of mobilization:

"At present there are too many corps on the frontier. The arrival of their reservists is slow and complicated. The corps can be attacked by the enemy, who will be ready much more rapidly, before their concentration is completed. They may be disorganized, and the result of the whole campaign may be compromised. It is much preferable to detrain entire mobilized units, which are equipped with everything they need. Therefore the corps are to be withdrawn into the interior. The reform will be completed in a year. Suhomlinov promises that the frontier will be guarded by a number of reinforced corps, which do not need reservists from the interior".²²⁷

In the event of a war, it was known that Suhomlinov would concentrate his forces on the line Grodno-Belostok-Brest-Kovel-Rovno, with a vanguard of two army corps in Warsaw (map 26).

The French general staff was critical of this plan, because it did not really threaten the Germans. If the Russians were ready to act on the nineteenth day, they could reach the frontier of southern Posen after a march of two weeks only, i.e. after the thirtieth day — if the enemy in East Prussia and Galicia had been successfully paralyzed previously — which was much too late to be of any help for France, whose battle in Lorraine would have been decided by then. The French wished that Russia would strengthen her covering forces in order to immobilize the German corps on the frontier. But in fact they were moving the centre of gravity of their army to the interior of the empire.²²⁸

²²⁷ "Concentration russe. Enregistrement des principaux renseignements". s.d. EMATSH 7 N 1537

²²⁸ "Note sur le stationnement de l'armée russe, decembre 1909". EMATSH 7 N 1537

Next year, 1910, the news were even worse. It was learned that Suhomlinov was abandoning and demolishing Ivangorod, Warsaw, and Zegrze, while the rear fortresses of Ossovec, Grodno, and Brest were being reinforced. And several army corps were being transferred to the interior. Only cavalry and a few rifle brigades were left at the Vistula as a vanguard. Suhomlinov had abandoned his previous idea of having Warsaw and Ivangorod as beachheads for the attack of the promised 700 000—800 000 men. The Russians were abandoning Poland to the Germans because of the threat that the Polish salient would be cut off at the Belostok-Brest line. But if the Russians retreated from Poland, the Germans would be left free to transfer all their troops to the west, leaving only two army corps to watch the frontier.

"This idea, perhaps suggested by the Germanophile party, cannot be explained except by a momentaneous moral depression . . . These changes are certainly going to alarm the press . . ." ²²⁹

The French press did raise an alarm. *Le Temps* wrote:

"We recall that the Polish fortresses were declassified last year (1909). That might have been the foreword for replacing them with new, more modern fortifications. This view cannot be upheld any longer, in the light of the transfer of the fifth army corps. Incontestably, it is a question of a general retreat . . . They have abandoned Dragomirov's doctrines. Up to this time the Russian army has had the intention of attacking as promptly as possible. The fifteen corps of Warsaw, Vilna, and Kiev, supported by the Moscow and St. Petersburg troops, were an offensive army in the first line. This disposition has been criticized for several years because of the danger of getting surrounded. A new factor was the destruction of the Russian navy, which left the coast and St. Petersburg open to a landing. There was reason enough to transfer part of the Vilna troops closer to the capital; and from there

²²⁹ "Note au sujet des projets Russes". Matton 10.II 1910. EMATSH 7 N 1538

it was only a step to the general withdrawal of the Warsaw troops. Thus the mirage of getting enveloped by the Germans made Suhomlinov abandon the principles of his teacher. Dragomirov had said that the Russian offensive would make all danger of the army getting cut off from Russia disappear. We must regret that France was not informed of so considerable alterations in Russia's military position. The changes ought to have been the object of detailed study by the two allied staffs'.²³⁰

French ambassadors got worried, too. Barrère in Rome expressed doubt and anxiety: if the new Russian dispositions were completely defensive, how much value was left in the military alliance?²³¹ Jules Cambon in Berlin thought that either the Russians were making concessions to the Germans, or at least they were repeating the tactics they had employed against Charles XII and Napoleon. The new dispositions indicated further that the antagonism to Austria, characteristic of Izvol'skiï, was also inspiring the general staff in St. Petersburg. The retreat from the German border might be considered by Europe as a weakening of the Dual Alliance, and consequently a weakening of France's international position.

Cambon stressed the need to demonstrate to the European public the unshaken intimacy of the allied general staffs.²³²

5.4. The Unshaken Intimacy of the Allied General Staffs

A useful demonstration was the renewing of the regular discussions of the chiefs of general staff. The preliminaries were

²³⁰ *Le Temps* 20.V 1910, "Le déplacement du 5^e Corps d' Armée Russe". EMATSH 7 N 1537

²³¹ Barrère, Ambassador in Rome to MAE 30.XI 1910. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40,

²³² Jules Cambon, Ambassador in Berlin to MAE 30.V 1910. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40, DDF XII/2 n:o 504

a rehearsal of the previous discussions: generals Gerngross and Ladebatt declared that the first and principal aim of the allied armies was the defeat of the German army. A German mobilization would cause an immediate and simultaneous mobilization by the Dual Alliance, while a mobilization of the Austrian or Italian forces presupposed consultation before the allied mobilization in response. The generals agreed that Germany would probably leave only three to five army corps in the east. General Ladebatt described the French troop concentrations and declared formally that the French army would start an immediate offensive against the German army.

General Gerngross explained that according to the new Russian plan of concentration the Tsar's army would fight the Germans with two-fifths of its strength. By their peace-time attitude they would give the Germans the impression that a serious offensive against East Prussia was to be launched between the fifteenth and thirtieth days — which would prevent Germany from denuding her eastern frontier — and on the twentieth day they would cross the frontier with sufficient force to fight victoriously against the corps which the Germans were probably leaving in the east.

The generals agreed to continue their discussions annually. And the article of the convention forbidding either party to conclude a separate peace was declared to exclude equally a separate armistice or desisting from operations.²³³

General Ladebatt seems to have been satisfied with this discussion. Knowing Suhomlinov's plans we must conclude that the Russian general shamelessly lied to his colleague. The French politicians were not so easily satisfied. The general staff was asked for more detailed information on the Russian plans:

”What have been the results of the démarches of our ambassador and discussions of the chiefs of the general staffs?”²³⁴

General Brun of the general staff explained to the minister for foreign affairs that from the Russian point of view the new

²³³ Procès-verbal de l'entretien des 7/20 et 8/21 septembre 1910, entre les Chefs d'Etat-major Généraux des armées française et russe”. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40. DDF XX/2 n:o 573

²³⁴ ”Note du ministre”. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40, p. 53—

positioning of the troops was quite logical. It increased the quantity and quality of combat troops and facilitated their mobilization. The army was more evenly distributed on the territory of the empire, and it was better situated from the point of view of ensuring internal order. The defence of the secondary theatres in Finland, Caucasia, and Siberia was much better organized.

It was true, Brun went on, that more than one corps had been taken away from the western frontier. But the remaining corps, with reinforced peacetime effectives, were numerous enough to engage great German forces on the eastern front, and to undertake an eventual offensive without delay. The mobilization of the corps in the interior had been speeded up. The progress made to improve the rapidity of their transport to the frontier, although not quite satisfactory, was nevertheless real. Thus the Germans would be compelled to leave an important part of their corps in the east, which was a relief for France.

Therefore, the general concluded, even if the new disposition of the Russian forces had not augmented the offensive value of Russia, neither had it diminished it. This was on the condition that a spirit of offensive existed, and in this respect

“the verbal declarations of the Russian chief of staff, repeated by the minister of war, have been quite categorical. There is no reason to doubt them at present”.²³⁵

Identical assurances were given by the Grand Duke Nikolaï Nikolaevič and Suhomlinov to the French ambassador Louis.²³⁶

The fact that General Gerngross had been reluctant to disclose any details of the new troop concentration plan ought to have been ominous enough to raise some suspicion. He had promised to give them later, but again he delayed the explanation because “an important conference” was to be held in January 1911 where “some point will be cleared up”.²³⁷ The military district commanders with their chiefs of staff were

²³⁵ Brun to MAE 14.XII 1910. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40

²³⁶ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 23.XII 1910. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40

²³⁷ War minister to MAE 17.XII 1910. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40

convening in the war ministry in order to study mobilization and concentration of forces as well as the proposed operations during the first month.²³⁸

In fact, in this conference, and in another one held in February 1912, the Russian generals hotly opposed giving up large provinces without battle. They persuaded Suhomlinov and the general staff to push the troop concentrations forward. The new, more aggressive and courageous plan was thus not due to any direct pressure by the French, who had accepted the little they knew of the plan of 1910, but to pressure by the Russian military chiefs.²³⁹ But perhaps Suhomlinov and his aides — Gerngross, and then Žilinskiĭ and Januškevič, and the Quartermaster General Danilev — knew that the French would not like their plan, and this knowledge made them receptive to criticism.

The protocol of the discussion of the generals was ratified by the allied governments. This was necessary because the reservation concerning the Austrian or Italian mobilization represented an essential change in the convention.

”A mobilization to support an ally presupposes a frontier where it is possible to give such support”.²⁴⁰

This view must reflect the aftermath of the Bosnian crisis and the Potsdam meeting. It may have seemed possible that Germany would not support Austria against Russia, and in that case France had no wish to get involved in a duel with Germany.

In any case Russia now lost French support in the event of a war against Austria. For Obručev this had been an essential part of the convention; Saharov had let it lapse, but Palicyn had tried hard to get it back. There is no indication of how Suhomlinov and his chiefs of staff regarded this aspect of the alliance. Count Kokovtsov was of the opinion that the minister of war was not able to think seriously about the political implications of his plans.

²³⁸ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 23. XII 1910. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40

²³⁹ Zaiončkovskiĭ, *Plany voĭny*. p. 235—

²⁴⁰ ”Procès-verbal de la réunion du lundi 15.II 1911 chez M. le Président de la République”. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40

Soothing reports by Louis and Ladebatt did not dispel all anxiety in Paris on the Russian plans. The French consul in Warsaw sent in a report on rumours that the new disposition of troops proved that the Russians did not believe in their ability to remain in Poland if the war broke out. According to the consul the reason for this was the hostile attitude of the population: the policy of Russification conflicted with the aspirations of the Polish people. Louis in St. Petersburg did not believe the consul, he still trusted the explanations given by the Russian generals.²⁴¹ But in the National Assembly in Paris strong criticism of the government was heard: the ministers declared that nothing had changed — but the Russians had drawn their troops from the frontier and dismantled their fortresses! The government had only answered that the Russians were free to do so.

"The impression left to us is that the Russian alliance is, as far as the military co-operation goes, nothing more than a memory" . . . The mission of the Russian army is no longer to defend their western frontier, their eventual enemy is certainly not Germany — this is the end of the military convention signed by Boisdeffre".²⁴²

These doubts seemed to be well founded, for instance when *Golos Moskvyy* — a rightist paper — wrote, as late as October 1912:

"The alliance does not oblige France to help us in affairs of the Orient, the Balkans included . . . There are many facts that demonstrate to us the advantages of approaching our neighbour (Germany). The alliance with France is directed against Germany, therefore it has no advantage for us, rather it is dangerous for us".²⁴³

Thus, after Potsdam, there were plenty of reasons to suspect the Russians of schemes to approach Germany. The French

²⁴¹ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 23.XII 1910. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40

²⁴² *Paris-Journal* l.II 1911. "Après Potsdam". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40

²⁴³ "Extrait du *Golos Moskvyy* 12/25.X 1912". AMAE C.P. Russie N.S. 41

civilians were much more alive to the danger than the military chiefs, who took at face value the assurances of the Russian generals. But even the French military could not remain completely satisfied with the "verbal assurances" of their Russian colleagues or with the "intimacy" of the two general staffs.

5.5. Colonel Janin Studies the Russian Army

It seems that Matton had not been able to create the confidential relations with the leading circles of the Russian army which Moulin had succeeded in maintaining for so many years. Information was much more sparse and came in late. Diplomatic representatives and journalist rumourmongers sent in more news. That was why a new man, Lieutenant-Colonel Janin, was sent to Russia. Ostensibly he was to study in the Academy of the General Staff in St. Petersburg, but in fact he was to ferret out information on the changed Russian plans. The instructions given to him reveal that the French general staff had also begun to be apprehensive in the aftermath of the Potsdam meeting.

Janin was given several hypotheses to test for an explanation. He was to ascertain whether the new plan was due to

1. a wish to please the Germans and to show that Russia was her enemy only in theory
2. a fear of an Austro-German offensive with superior forces before the Russian reinforcements had arrived from the interior
3. difficulties in realizing the mobilization and concentration of troops in Poland, where everything had to be transported from the interior along with inferior and lengthy routes
4. a desire to organize the recruiting and mobilization on a regional basis.

He had also to study how the acceleration of mobilization and, on the other hand, the increased distance to be travelled by the transports from the interior to the frontier affected the time the Russians would be able to start their operations; how great was the strength of the covering forces on the frontier; what was the division of the Russian forces between the Austrian and German frontiers; and whether changes had occurred in the Russian attitude towards France.²⁴⁴

After a winter of study (1910—1911) Janin reported that Russia had, indeed, turned towards the interior, and had given up external adventures. A will to develop the country materially and morally had emerged; the wealth of central and eastern Russia seemed more important than the western confines of the empire. Troops were transferred from the western frontier towards the interior because of the revolution and jacqueries of 1905 and 1906. They might be needed also in case the workers' strikes grew into open conflict.

National pride had suffered under the defeat of the Japanese war, Janin went on. This had caused an explosion of nationalist feeling among some people. A strong party wanted to unify Russia and assimilate other nationalities by fair means or foul. Therefore a series of measures had been taken regarding the Finns; and then there were the Poles, a particularly tempestuous and resistant race. One additional reason for the transfer of the garrisons from the west was the reluctance to let Russia's military expenditures be spent to the profit of Poland.

Many people in Russia liked Germany more than France. They were also afraid that the French aversion to Tsarism might diminish France's determination to support Russia; neither did they have a high opinion of the value of the French army. That was why the idea of keeping strong forces near the western frontier was thought to be obsolete.

The old plans for troop concentrations had been difficult to realize, and this might have been disastrous in the beginning of a war, especially if Germany had concentrated her principal forces against Russia and not against France. The Russians had adopted the most unfavourable hypothesis of having to fight

²⁴⁴ Programme du LtCol Janin, septembre 1910. EMATSH 7 N 1485

alone against Germany in the beginning of the war. They did not doubt eventual French support, but they wished to be prepared for the eventuality that it would not turn out to be as effective as the French had promised. Thus Russia was adopting the strategy of Peter I or 1812.

Russia also had more enemies than before. Even though of enormous size, she was encircled. And her enormous size annulled the advantage of interior lines of communication. Japan had obtained a beachhead on the Asian continent, which made her eventual offensive easier and speedier. Her victory had nourished her avidity, and there were already secret Japanese agents among the Siberian natives.

China was making military progress, and felt a profound hostility towards Russia. Her population was increasing. All this made the future sombre for Russia.

Russian Turkestan was surrounded by Persia and Turkey, i.e. countries where the Russians were heartily hated. Pan-Islamic ideas were seeping in among the population as far as on the Urals and on the banks of the Volga — Turkish emissaries had been seen there. Turkey was especially dangerous, because she was Germany's tool; the Germans were at home in Turkey. Turkey's military might was growing, and the mobilization of the Turkish Erzerum corps would be accelerated when the Anatolian railway was completed. In the Caucasian provinces the vanquished Mussulmans had remained hostile to Russia, nor were the other peoples and religions more favourably disposed towards the empire. Defence on the Caucasian frontier was difficult. Hence an offensive was necessary, but in peacetime sufficient troops could not be maintained there, and the railway was a zig-zag which allowed only 14 trains a day. That was why Russia was improving her railways in Caucasia, as well as in the Far East, more than in the west.

In the west Rumania was hostile, a member of the Triple Alliance.

Austria was profoundly hated by the Russians for reasons of history and of religion, and because of the Bosnian annexation, and indeed from all kind of suspicion. Austria favoured her own Poles, and might try to conquer Poland with the aid of the Russian Poles. Perhaps she aimed also at the Ukraine. The persons in governing positions in Austria were supposed to be hostile to Russia.

German might was frightening, though in fact there were grounds for only relatively unimportant disputes with her.

Sweden was a small country and therefore important only as an auxiliary to the other enemies. But she was dangerous because of her influence on Finland. The years 1905 and 1906 had only worsened the situation in the Grand Duchy.

Thus Russia had enemies on all frontiers. She could not afford to wage war, and she did not want war, especially not against Germany, with whom she had no contradictory interests. She had the carcass of Poland as a shield against an attack from the west, and she hoped that Germany would force Austria to be peacefully disposed towards Russia.²⁴⁵

Janin's report reflects well the suspicious, jealous outlook on the world which reigned in military and patriotic circles in Russia at that time.

On Russian mobilization Janin reported that the territorial system adopted in 1910 did accelerate mobilization. The reservists did not need to travel so far. But it remained slow compared with the speed of German or French mobilization, and there was nothing that could be done to speed up it. The most important and effective means of accelerating Russian troop concentrations was to improve the railway network. As it was, there were several army corps to be transported along one railway line. Other problems remained, too, especially the great percentage of Jews and Poles in Poland, "towards whom the Russians feel an extreme aversion".²⁴⁶

The defence of St. Petersburg remained a problem. Sweden, although a minor enemy, was dangerous as a vanguard for an attack by the Triple Alliance against the Russian capital. She was preparing for an invasion of Finland, where the situation resembled that of Caucasia. The Finns counted on Russia's internal or external difficulties to regain their complete autonomy — the press of the Grand Duchy did not conceal this aim — and "I have been told several times that this is an absolute fact". With a view to the contraband traffic, it was not at all unreasonable to suppose that the insurgents had light artillery there. That was why Finland could not be left unoccupied in the event of war.

²⁴⁵ Janin to General Vignal 9—13.V 1911. EMATSH 7 N 1485

²⁴⁶ Janin to Vignal 3.III 1911. EMATSH 7 N 1485

Janin's informants stressed that St. Petersburg needed her garrison even in wartime. It was the site of the government, the residence of the emperor and his family. Prudence dictated leaving a strong garrison there. That was to be the Guards corps, with its strong ties to the sovereign and his family. Perhaps even more was necessary, in the light of the proximity of Finland and the difficulty of securing order in the immense city and its environment.

There was also the danger of a German landing, because the capital was situated on the coast, and because Russia had no fleet and one could not be rebuilt very soon. It was true that there were rumours of fortifications to be constructed on the coasts of the Gulf of Finland.

"An attempt at a landing on the Russian coast by the Germans may seem very improbable to us, but it does not follow that the Russians see the situation in the same light".

The threat of enemy landing was a constant and frequent subject of study in the Academy of the General Staff. Even a small attempt on the coastal towns would produce a serious moral effect, and rumours sown by the enemy augmented the Russian tendency to precautionary measures on the coast. Janin doubted whether the troops in the St. Petersburg military district (the Guards, the first army corps in Novgorod, the eighteenth in Estonia and Pskov, and twenty-second in Finland) could be included in the strength of the Russian army in respect of the western theatre of operations. In any case the Guards and the twenty-second corps could only be mobilized very slowly, because they had no reservists in the neighbourhood.²⁴⁷

By the year 1911 the Dual Alliance did not appear to be worth much, then. Nor did France receive much help from her ally and friend during the renewed Moroccan crisis. During the time of the Bosnian crisis Izvol'skii had received cold comfort from Paris. It must have been sweet for him to react identically to the French government, when, in its turn, it asked for support in Morocco in 1911. Russian public opinion would not

²⁴⁷ Janin to Vignal 28—31.III 1911. EMATSH 7 N 1485

be able to understand that a mere colonial question might be a *casus belli*, Izvol'skiĭ said.²⁴⁸ — It was with British support that Kiderlen's schemes in Morocco were repelled and rendered relatively harmless in the Congo.

It is true the the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg reported that the Russian Foreign Office had promised to support France, not only diplomatically but also militarily, if necessary.²⁴⁹ Generals Dubail and Ladebatt visited St. Petersburg and got a promise of support from the Russian general staff, too. But they got also a declaration that the Russian army would not regain complete operational ability until 1913.²⁵⁰ It is not quite clear whether any decision had been made in St. Petersburg in the event that the Moroccan crisis had led to war. It is well known that Stolypin demanded peace for his reforms. During the critical month of August the treaty on Persia and Baghdad railway was signed between Russia and Germany. Thus there was no certainty of Russian help for France, even if the Russians declared that the agreement with Germany did not constitute a treaty on general policy between the two empires.²⁵¹

A little later Žilinskiĭ was reported to have said that a war because of Morocco would not have been popular in Russia, and that public opinion was not without influence in Russia; it had forced the government to war in 1877.²⁵²

Janin calculated also the strength of the Russian army, its effect on Germany and its value for France.²⁵³

In peacetime there were 260 000 men in the Vilna and Warsaw districts (Niemen-Vistula frontier 140 000, Riga-Minsk area 70 000, Lublin-Brest area facing Austria 50 000). On the twenty-third day there would be 700 000 men concentrated on the 350 kilometres of the Niemen-Vistula frontier. The offensive might begin then, and contact with the Germans might be expected on the twenty-eighth day. If the Russians won preliminary successes against Austria, they would be able to

²⁴⁸ MAE to Ambassador in St. Petersburg 21. VIII 1911. DDF XIV/2 n:o 200

²⁴⁹ MAE to Ambassadors in St. Petersburg, Berlin, London 14.VIII 1911. DDF XIV/2 n:o 172

²⁵⁰ "Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 18/31 aout 1911, entre les Chefs d'Etat-major généraux des armées française et russe". DDF XIV/2, n:o 232

²⁵¹ = ²⁴⁹

²⁵² "Voyage du G1 Gilinsky 1912". Matton 17.I 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1487

launch a really dangerous attack against Germany on the fortieth to fiftieth day. This day could be advanced if Austria met grave complication with Italy or in the Balkans. Thus the Russian action would not have any serious effect on the Germans before the thirtieth day. Germany needed to keep only three to five corps and ten to fifteen reserve divisions in the east.²⁵⁴

Janin's calculation was based on the hypothesis that the Russians were to attack at the earliest moment. His information on the Russian troop concentrations (map 27) shows the Russian army corps much more to the west than in the previous, alarming plan (which the French had not seen, but heard rumours of, as pointed out earlier). It is evident that by the end 1911 Janin has received preliminary information on the plan of 1912.

There were eight infantry divisions and seven cavalry divisions covering the German border. Seven infantry divisions and five cavalry divisions served as covering troops for the Austrian border. These units could be mobilized and concentrated on the eighth day.

The region of St. Petersburg was defended by the Baltic army, which consisted of the Guards and the twenty-second corps with 3 reserve divisions.

There were four armies in the north-western group against East Prussia, as well as four armies in the south-western group

²⁵³ The strength of the Russian army in 1911

active troops	in Europe	Guards corps Grenadier corps I—XXV army corps
	Caucasia	I—III corps
	Turkestan	I—II corps
	Siberia	I—V corps
	in all available	37,5 corps
	in Europe	28,5 corps (III Cauc. included)
reserve troops	infantry	35 divisions
	cavalry	9 divisions
militia troops	I call-up	20 divisions
	II call-up	20 divisions

²⁵³ "Note sur l'armée russe, juin 1911". EMATSH 7 N 1538

²⁵⁴ "Au sujet de la valeur de la coopération russe, ltcol Janin dec 1911, et Avis du 2^e bureau de l'état-major de l'armée". EMATSH 7 N 1538

against Galicia. If the Germans should attack with more than 25 divisions, the four armies (17 corps and 17 reserve divisions) would defend the line Kovno-Belostok. If there should be less than 25 German divisions attacking, the north-west group was to fight with 15 corps on a line a little more forwards, one or two marches from the Prussian border. Novo-Georgievsk was to be defended by the left army consisting of 2 corps and 2—3 reserve divisions. The south-western group was to have 10 or 12 corps, depending on the situation on the German border. The active corps would be concentrated on the twenty-third day, except for the twenty-fifth corps from eastern Russia which would be concentrated on the thirtieth day. Reserve troops would be ready for action on the fortieth day. The south-western group was to attack as soon as possible in order to free the left flank of the north-western group. The latter was to attack East Prussia as soon as it had the necessary superiority, without waiting till the twenty-third day.²⁵⁵

Thus the Russian plan now seemed to be turning out more satisfactorily from the French point of view. But before it was completed the Balkan crisis of 1912—1913 brought a new urgency to military planning work and to the general diplomatic framework of the Dual Alliance.

5.6. The Balkan Wars 1912—1913

Italy wanted to assert herself as a great power, but it was difficult to find an adversary weak enough. Even Abyssinia had been too strong. But by 1911 it was seen that the Young Turk revolution had not been able to rejuvenate Turkey, which continued to live in a state of disorder. While other powers were occupied by the Morocco crisis, the Italians attacked Libya. The Turks were not able to resist very well, but the desert nomads proved a nuisance and prevented a swift pacification. To conquer them Italy sent a fleet to the Aegean

²⁵⁵ "Note sur la concentration russe" Matton 22.III 1911. EMATSH 7 N 1538

Sea, where the Dodecanese Islands were occupied and traffic in the Straits disturbed. Russian grain worth millions of roubles rotted in South Russian ports.

The imperial government could not afford to ignore the new complication. But Russia was not eager to resort to forward politics in the Near East yet; her own internal reforms had only started a few years earlier. A plan was made to defend the status quo in alliance with Turkey and the small Balkan states.

A note was sent to the Porte. But the Turks had no confidence in the good intentions of Russia. The note made them suspicious instead. To pacify them Sazonov had to disown the note and blame everything on Čarykov, the ambassador in Constantinople.

— — —

In the beginning of 1912 Matton discussed the situation with Žilinskiĭ, the new chief of staff. The general thought that something was going to happen in the Balkans in the spring. Perhaps Austria was to advance southwards to the Sandjak of Novipazar. That would be opposed by Serbia and Montenegro, while Bulgaria might try to conquer Macedonia. Russia would have to intervene. Probably a *casus foederis* would emerge for the Triple Alliance, and consequently also for the Dual Alliance and the Triple Entente. The result would be the European conflagration which had so often been predicted and so often adjourned; now it was to be faced.

Matton concluded that Russia was beginning to regain her confidence — more so than she had wanted to admit during the Moroccan crisis. She would probably not submit to another affront like that of 1908—1909. If Germany was going to support Austria, the Russians hoped that France would support Russia.

”It seems to me rather advantageous for France if the war against Germany should break out under these conditions”.

A Russo-Serbo-Montenegrin war against Austria would be popular in Russia, and, said Matton, would remain popular if it were transformed into a war against the Triple Alliance. Being the first to take to arms, Russia’s mobilization would be in advance of that of Germany and that of France. And if

Germany should mobilize in order to support Austria, there was some hope that she would send more forces to the eastern frontier, to the advantage of the French.

It seemed desirable that a conflagration, if it must come, should come under these conditions, and before the Russian army was again drawn towards other directions of conquest, e.g. China, Japan, or Turkey, "where we are not immediately interested, and where consequently all the sacrifices we have made for Russia's military recovery would be lost for us".²⁵⁶

Here we have our Machiavellian friend of 1892 at his schemes again, eagerly looking forward to the great conflagration, as did also the Russian chief of staff. — As will be seen, Matton's report had no influence on the course of the Balkan crisis of 1912—1913. But it may have had some importance for the consequent strengthening of the Dual Alliance by French efforts in the years 1912—1914.

The St. Petersburg government had thought of the alliance of the Balkan states as a check on Austrian appetites. But the small Balkan states made their alliance against Turkey, and they were spurred on by Pan Slavist Russian envoys in the Balkan "capitals", in direct contradiction to the intentions and directives of Sazonov. Turkey's defeat in the war against Italy made the Balkan states confident of their success. The confidence was not misplaced. The Turks were very nearly chased out of Europe. The danger of a Bulgarian conquest of Constantinople caused feverish preparations for a Russian or an international intervention. Happily for Russia, at the last moment the Turks succeeded in stopping the Bulgarian advance.

But the partition of Macedonia proved difficult. Austria and Italy had no wish to see Serbia on the Adriatic and insisted on an independent Albania on the coast. Russia opposed these demands and supported Serbia and Montenegro. A war was just avoided, because Russia was too weak, and because France and Germany restrained their allies. Sir Edward Grey invited the ambassadors of the great powers to a conference which succeeded in adjusting the conflicting politics of the great powers. Albania was made independent.

²⁵⁶ Matton to war ministeri 17.I 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1487

With Albania out of the game, there was much less booty left for the Balkan allies. The quarrel led to a Bulgarian attack on Serbia, who was then supported by Greece; then Bulgaria was stabbed in the back by Romania, and even Turkey reconquered Adrianople (Edirne) on the Bulgarian frontier.

The result was a disaster for Russia. She had not been able to support her Slav protégés, the contending parties had not appealed to the Tsar's arbitration as they were supposed to do, and now a defeated Bulgaria was embittered and no longer a Russian satellite. Of Russian goodwill only a precarious remnant was left in Serbia. On the other hand, Romania started casting covetous eyes on Transylvania and for a while forgot her irredenta in Bessarabia.

A great war had been very close. As can be seen from Matton's report, Žilinskii was not especially decidedly against a war. Suhomlinov had proposed a mobilization against Austria, without thought of the German reaction. The Tsar's civilian ministers had nevertheless succeeded in averting the catastrophe. Especially had Kokovtsov, Stolypin's successor since 1911, been decidedly against war.

But Sazonov was heard to say:

"An Austrian attack into Serbia would arouse Russian opinion, which would be difficult for the government to restrain"

and Izvol'skii explained:

"although the Russian government has the firm intention of not being dragged to war, it would be difficult to oppose public opinion".²⁵⁷

Neo-Slavist feeling had been awakened by the Balkan events. This augmented the national feeling which had grown in strength since 1905. It was difficult to ignore this opinion. Even if the Russian government was not a parliamentary one, it needed some support in order to be able to function in face of the opposition from the right and from the left. After the debacles of 1908—1909 and 1912—1913 it was difficult to accept a third diplomatic Tsushima without irreparable damage to internal stability and external prestige.

²⁵⁷ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 17.XII 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1480
Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 12.XII 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1480

6. Naval Plans

Russia was a continental power, and the Dual Alliance was mainly a military affair. But the naval aspect is not completely void of interest either, because it completes the military picture and sheds additional light on Russian imperialism.

It is a pity that the documentation is not complete, the reports of the naval attachés being available only for the years 1904—1913.²⁵⁸

Again, the naval attachés were replaced frequently, almost annually. Thus they were not able to establish such confidential relations with their Russian colleagues as Moulin did. Consequently they had no naval secrets to report, comparable to the mobilization, concentration and operational plans of the army. Of course, there may not have existed any detailed plans, due to the different nature of naval operations compared with warfare on land. The Gulf of Finland seems to have been an exception in this respect.

The naval policy and building programmes were publicly discussed and consequently have been able to be dealt with by numerous historians.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Service Historique de la Marine, SHM, series BB7, volumes 67, 75, 120—122

²⁵⁹ Petrov, *Podgotovka . . .*,

K.F. Šacilo, *Russkii imperializm i razvitie flota 1906—1914 gg.* Moskva 1968

René Gregerer, *Die Russische Flotte im ersten Weltkrieg 1914—1917.* München 1970

Charles E. Adams, *Der Wiederaufstieg der russischen Kriegsmarine in den Jahren 1905—1914.* *Marine Rundschau* 1/1964.

6.1. A Naval Convention Discussed

The military convention was concerned only with warfare on the continent. To complete it, a naval convention was discussed in 1901, evidently in connection with the strengthening of the alliance at Delcassé's instigation. The chiefs of the French and Russian naval staffs discussed their strategy in the event of a war against England and/or the Triple Alliance. The discussions had no practical consequences, but they illuminate very well the Russian dispositions on the eve of the Japanese war.

The French admiral explained that the principal French naval forces were to be concentrated in the Mediterranean, leaving only second-class and coastal battleships for the North Sea. A landing in England was to be prepared, and made to look threatening, in order to tie up as many English troops as possible. The French Far East naval forces were to operate in the Indian Ocean.

The Russian admiral stated that Russian coastal vessels and small warships were to be concentrated in the Baltic Sea, to take up a strictly defensive position. Eight armoured ships were to operate in the Black Sea, and three cruisers in the Mediterranean. The navy had the task of shipping one army corps over the Black Sea to the Bosphorus. Sixteen battleships and thirty-two cruisers would form the Russian Pacific squadron.

Thus, once the Russian building programme was completed, the Russian and French fleets would complement each other rather well. The presence of the Russian fleet in the Far East would enable the French to withdraw their ships from the China Sea. The Russian sphere of action would be extended to the Malacca peninsula, and the Russians might have the use of some bases in French Indochina. The French cruisers in the Indian Ocean would prevent the English from sending reinforcement to their Asian colonies. A diversion by the Russian Black Sea fleet from the Dardanelles to the eastern Mediterranean would facilitate the task of the main French fleet in the Mediterranean and weaken the English squadron at Malta. France would guarantee Russian interests and security in the Mediterranean and prevent the English from sending

their army through Turkey. Because of the menace of a landing in England, the English in India would be left alone to face the Russian offensive from Central Asia over the land frontier.²⁶⁰

A couple of years later the French sketched anew Russian support for France: the eight Black Sea battleships were to convoy the transport of the Sevastopol and Odessa army corps over the sea to the Bosphorus at the beginning of hostilities. After forcing the passages, the warships would convoy the transports to the Gallipoli peninsula, where the troops would disembark, while the warships were destroying or occupying the fortifications on the banks of the Dardanelles. After that the battleships could advance to Bizerta, there to join the French executing French naval plans in the Mediterranean.²⁶¹

This plan, with no difficulties anticipated, seems to have been wishful thinking on the part of the French admirals, a project without Russian signatures. Why should the Russians have forced the Straits only in order to support French plans?

These naval plans were not as detailed and concrete as the army plans, of course, because ships are able to move and act with much less previous preparation than armies. Their interest lies in the implied dreams of imperialist grandeur.

These schemes of naval imperialism were not without support among influential Russian journalists. *Novoe Vremja* sketched a Russian sea power with French support:

"The Russo-French alliance is not necessary for obtaining French support against the German army, which Russia has no reason to be afraid of. (As indicated earlier, at this time *Novoe Vremja* supported the idea of a continental coalition). But Russia has a redoubtable enemy at sea. If Russia wants to benefit from sea commerce, if she does not wish to let her peasants toil only in order to enrich English navigation companies, she has to ensure the freedom of the seas, the equality of all nations on the ocean passages which have not yet been divided into spheres of influence. That is why Alexander III

²⁶⁰ "Note sur un accord naval entre la France et la Russie 21.XII 1901." AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 35. DDF III/2, annexe III

²⁶¹ "Accord naval entre la France et la Russie. Hypothèse d'une guerre avec l'Angleterre. 5.I 1903". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 36

began to create the navy without which the commercial fleet, the guarantee of the welfare of nations, cannot exist. The Russo-French alliance guarantees to Russia the help of the French fleet, the only fleet which the English cannot blockade in its bases and which is able to attack the English on the oceans. The combined Russo-French navies might well be able to dispute the English title of the queen of the seas".²⁶²

Later, during the Far East war, the French consul in Harkov reported that a committee had been formed there, under the protection of a grand duke and an admiral, with the aim of acquiring a chain of naval bases reaching from Kronstadt to Vladivostok, with the help of the French. On the Mediterranean Algiers or Crete were thought of, on the Red Sea Djibuti or some Arabian port was hoped for, then followed Madagascar and/or Sumatra on the Indian Ocean, and finally some Chinese or Indochinese port on the coast of the China Sea. The coal for these stations would be exported from the Donets, which explained the interest of businessmen there. The consul characterized the project as chimeric.²⁶³

Of course, this plan had no practical consequences. But it is important as an example of the unofficial dreams that formed the background, the sounding board and moving force, of the official diplomacy and military or naval schemes described here and elsewhere in this study. Imperialism cannot be understood if only official documents are studied. The chancelleries dealt with only that which was deemed practical and immediately possible, while the patriots, chauvinists, builders of empire, desired much more.

The naval discussions reflected the fact that at this time the Russian and French staffs saw their alliance as a guarantee against England, too. But by 1903 Delcassé was preparing the ground for the Entente Cordiale, and it is understandable that no naval convention was signed nor any definite plans made; especially in view of the threatening conflict in the Far East.

Not all French sailors were enthusiastic about their allies:

²⁶² *Novoe Vremja* 4/17.XII 1902. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 36

²⁶³ French consul in Harkov to MAE 12.IX 1904. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 17

"Their ships are well kept, and the internal service seems correct and even rigid in details. But their manoeuvring left much to be desired. The ships did not keep position, anchoring took a long time and nevertheless was no great success . . . However, I am far from fearing that in a common war we should experience nuisances analogous to those we felt a century ago from our Spanish allies".²⁶⁴

Somewhat later the imperial navy proved its worth at Tsushima.

6.2. The Calamitous Odyssey

From the very beginning, there was only bad news from the Far East war:

"The conduct of the Russian squadron in the naval battle of 10/23. VIII 1904, its subsequent inaction, and its ultimate destruction without battle in the basin of Port Arthur was bound to call forth various comments in the Far East, generally not very flattering to our ally".²⁶⁵

Then the ships collected from the Baltic ports were named the second and the third Pacific squadron and sent to the Far East under the command Admirals Rožestvenskiĭ and Nebogatov. The copious correspondence of the French agents along the route was concerned with the supply problems of the Russians, who called in frequently at French ports. The further the armada advanced, the more nervously the French tried to keep up a semblance of neutrality.²⁶⁶ They had no wish to provoke the Japanese, which might bring with it the calamity of an

²⁶⁴ Contre-Amiral Boutet, commander of the Mediterranean light squadron to the commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet 14.IV 1902. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 36

²⁶⁵ Vice-admiral Bayle to navy minister II.IV 1905. SHM BB 7 n:o 67 a

²⁶⁶ SHM BB 7 n:o 67 a "Guerre russo-japonaise" contains the correspondence

eventual British involvement. On the other hand, the Russians should not be cold-shouldered into German arms.²⁶⁷

Afterwards it was easy to see the inevitability of the Russian defeat and to point to forebodings recorded before the battle:

"All these complaints of the minor difficulties, impatience at the slightest obstacle, the discouragement on any occasion, seem to indicate that in the measure the squadron approaches the East the commanders realize the difficulty of their mission and search for a plausible pretext which would allow them to declare that it is impossible to proceed further".²⁶⁸

But in fact there are also plenty of optimistic reports among the contemporary documents:

"The Russian admiral made an excellent impression, he seemed energetic and frank, and apparently he possesses the entire confidence of his men . . ."²⁶⁹

"What is known of his character makes certain that he will seek battle, and that is all that is known of his plans".²⁷⁰

These reports reflect also the lack of concrete naval plans, referred to above:

"The Russian admiral is allowed complete freedom of action, no one in St. Petersburg knowing Rožestvenskiĭ's plans".²⁷¹

It is true that the Russian admirals had a special reason for the absence of plans. The imperial navy had no naval general staff at that time, and the French staff had planned their voyage for them — the route, the ports to be called at, the logistics, the manoeuvres.

The complete destruction of the fleet was a calamity, an unpredictable and unpleasant occurrence to the French as well as to the Russians themselves.

²⁶⁷ cf. Manninen, *The Second Russian . . .*

²⁶⁸ Naval attaché to navy minister 17.XII 1904. SHM BB 67 e 1

²⁶⁹ Admiral Jonquières to navy minister 8.V 1905. SHM BB 7 n:o 67 a

²⁷⁰ Naval attaché to navy minister 8/21 IV 1905. SHM BB 7 n:o 67 e 2

²⁷¹ = ²⁷⁰

"The battle of Tsushima makes clear in a sinister and new light the lack of naval and military spirit of our allies . . . they had the arms, they had the time to learn to use them . . . thus their ineptitude must have been great and profound . . . a general stupefaction reigns in the admiralty: 'a misfortune . . . who could have guessed', which does not augur well as to the future . . ." ²⁷²

Admiral Togo himself was unable to account for his complete and miraculous victory over "an equal and determined adversary" except by referring to the superhuman virtues of his emperor and the invisible protection of the imperial ancestors. ²⁷³ Of course, the French had no reason to exaggerate the valour of the Russian sailors and to rest content with a supernatural explanations. That there was something thoroughly wrong with the ally's navy was soon confirmed by a report from the Black Sea: "Mutiny of Knjaz Potemkin" ²⁷⁴

6.3. Reorganization

The participants in the battle of Tsushima were interrogated and culprits were found. But the French were hardly impressed:

"the more I learn, the more evident it seems to me that the participants are less guilty than those who remained barricaded in the offices of the Admiralty; organization and preparation was more faulty than execution" ²⁷⁵

The Russian navy had been inferior because badly commanded and consequently badly trained, being "an independent and

²⁷² Naval attaché to navy minister 3.VI 1905 SHM BB 67 e 2

²⁷³ "Combat naval de la mer du Japon". *Japan Times* 14.VI 1905 (translation). SHM BB 7 n:o 67 a

²⁷⁴ Ambassador in Constantinople to navy minister 5.VII 1905 SHM BB 7 n:o 67 d

²⁷⁵ Naval attaché to navy minister 19.V 1906. SHM BB 7 n:o 75—13

fanciful Grand Duchy".²⁷⁶ The commander-in-chief had been the Grand Duke Alekseï Aleksandrovič, Grand Admiral of Russia, a dilettante who bore a great part of the responsibility for the deplorable state of the navy, even in financial respects.²⁷⁷ But now a responsible minister of the navy was appointed, with a deputy minister responsible for the administration and a chief of the naval general staff charged with planning, preparing and organizing for war.²⁷⁸ Later this triumvirate — which could be compared with the divided leadership of the army during the years 1905—1909, a leadership bound together only by the President of the Council of Imperial Defence — was reorganized so that all officials were put under the minister. He alone became answerable for the naval forces of Russia.²⁷⁹

The reformers had quite a task confronting them. They had to overcome

"the inertia, bad faith, jealousy, ignorance, incomprehension, carelessness (of the former administration) . . . What remains of the Russian navy is so gangrened that if would be better if no trace of the ships or the personnel existed . . ." ²⁸⁰

There were people who regarded the situation as being beyond help:

"the navy is in a deplorable condition, even lower than the Ottoman navy; the moneys which ought to be spent on the reorganization of the navy do not arrive at their destination; the general staff is completely incapable, and with the Admiralty Council and Imperial Naval Cabinet (i.e. the old admirals and the emperor) meddling in the reform, the result is anarchy, impotence, squandering of money . . . There is only one thing that could save our country, and that is revolution . . ." ²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ "Organisation générale 1907". SHM BB 7 n:o 75—13

²⁷⁷ "Rapport de fin de mission I.II 1911". SHM BB 7 n:o 121 b

²⁷⁸ Naval attaché to navy minister 30.XI 1908. "Reforme du ministère de la marine". SHM BB 7 n:o 75 b

²⁷⁹ "Rapport annuel 9.XII 1912". SHM BB 7 n:o 121 e

²⁸⁰ Naval attaché to navy minister 1.VII 1905. SHM BB 7 n:o 67 e 2

²⁸¹ "Opinion de l'attaché naval russe à Constantinople". Ambassador in Constantinople to MAE 5.IV 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 r

The minister tried to eradicate corruption, but the French naval attaché was sceptical:

"I'm afraid that this measure will not result in anything, because the malady is endemic in the public and private administration; the race ought to be reformed . . ." ²⁸²

Gradually these sombre views were replaced by more optimistic reports; the improvement was undeniable, if slow. The Duma took a lively interest in the reform, demanding tangible improvement as a precondition of approving the naval estimates. Sometimes a constitutional crisis threatened, because the Duma was seen to be usurping the imperial prerogative of naval command.²⁸³ It was not until Admiral Grigorovič was appointed navy minister in 1911 that complete confidence was established between the naval administration and the Duma. After that there were no more parliamentary difficulties for the naval revival.

Instead of the previous theatre commanders (e.g. Commander in Chief of the Fleet and Ports of the Black Sea), port commanders directly under the ministry were now appointed to take care of the administrative task in the principal naval bases. This made the new commanders-in-chief of the naval forces in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Pacific able to concentrate on the operational preparation and training of their fleets.²⁸⁴ The improvement was slow, because innumerable officers of the old school survived in the lists, afraid of the pushy young men who had learned from the war.²⁸⁵ The inadequacy of the old commanders emerged clearly during the manoeuvres of 1908, when several young admirals demonstrated their ability.²⁸⁶ They were appointed to responsible posts and

²⁸² Naval attaché to navy minister 1.X 1909. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 b

²⁸³ "Budget naval et Douma", naval attaché to navy minister 23.I 1907. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 b

"Considerations divers: Ukase du 2 Septembre 1909 sur les lois fondamentaux". Naval attaché to navy minister 2.X 1909. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 e

²⁸⁴ Naval attaché to navy minister 24.I 1907. SHM BB 7 n:o 75

²⁸⁵ "Personnel 1908". Naval attaché to navy minister 22.I 1907. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 b

²⁸⁶ "Manoeuvres navales en Baltique", naval attaché to navy minister 28.VIII 1908. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 b

"the Baltic fleet, under the command of an energetic admiral, seems to be training capable personnel for the future navy . . . officers are animated by a new spirit, persuaded that a serious effort must be made".²⁸⁷

There is a delightful whiff of racism in the French comments:

"It is certain that the Admirals Essen and Boström, (Baltic and Black Sea commanders), neither of whom is of Russian origin, i.e. Slav, have succeeded in giving a shove to the natural torpor of this race . . ."²⁸⁸

Little by little serious progress was realized, discipline re-established²⁸⁹ and a determined effort made "to raise the navy to occupy a honorable place in the line of the navies of other European powers . . . conquering the inertia and habits dating from several centuries, in the gigantic effort of reconstructing a modern navy".²⁹⁰

The crews of the Russian ships were conscripts, who served for four years. The port equipages trained the conscripts, formed the crews for new ships, and prepared for mobilization.²⁹¹ The numerical strength of the navy did not significantly grow during these years, because of the lack of ships for them to man.²⁹² The illiteracy of the conscripts was a problem,

²⁸⁷ "Rapport annuel 9.XII 1912". SHM BB 7 n:o 121 c

²⁸⁸ "Rapport annuel 8.I 1910". SHM BB 7 n:o 120 r

²⁸⁹ "Au sujet de la mission en Russie de M. le Lieutenant de Vaisseau Galland, attaché a la 1^{ère} section, 13.IX 1909". SHM BB 7 n:o 120 f

²⁹⁰ "Recapitulation 1909". SHM BB 7 n:o 120 f

²⁹¹ Port equipages

St. Petersburg	2 equipages (= battalions, approximately)
Kronstadt	1/2
Vladivostok	1
Libau	1
Sevastopol	1
Nikolaev	1
Reval	1 company
Sveaborg	1 —"—
Caspian ports	1 —"—

"Equipages de la Marine". Naval attaché to navy minister 24.I 1907. SHM BB 7 n:o 75

²⁹² Naval effectives

1895 35,550 men

especially because the navy was becoming more mechanized all the time and needed more non-commissioned officers and engineers.²⁹³

This was a problem because of the revolutionary spirit of the workers, which had caused difficulties in the navy during the summer of 1905²⁹⁴ and again in 1906. The Stolypin regime revived the discipline of and confidence in the Russian empire. Nevertheless, there were new attempts at mutiny in 1912 (as well as strikes all over the empire, after the Lena shootings). The French observers did not regard these as specially dangerous:

"The plan was the work of a few Apache sailors, excited by the revolutionaries, mainly Jews . . . There are plenty of Jews in the Crimea, and they make the sailors believe that they, being better educated than the soldiers, are the elite of the nation, the vanguard of progress . . . They menaced with terrible punishment those sailors who did not wish to join them . . . A certain proof that their influence was not prevalent was the fact that the sailors who drew the lot to commence the rebellion denounced the instigators . . ."²⁹⁵

This report must reflect the view prevalent in the leading spheres of the doomed empire: there was nothing wrong, no radical need of reform, with Tsarism; the malcontents were Jews or members of other alien minorities; centralization and Russification was the way to revival. — The next year was reported to have been more peaceful, although many dangerous

²⁹² Continued

1899 42,160

1904 68,381

1906 44,147

1910 44,293

1914 50,000 (forecast)

Naval attaché to navy minister 3.XII 1904. "Au sujet du personnel". SHM BB 7 n:o 67 e 1

"Forces navales" 1906. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 e 2—13

"Rapport annuel" 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 r

²⁹³ "Rapport de fin de mission" 1.II 1911. SHM BB 7 n:o 121 b

²⁹⁴ Naval attaché to navy minister 1.VII 1905. SHM BB 7 n:o 67 e 2

²⁹⁵ "Personnel". Naval attaché to navy minister 17.VI 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122

a

men remained in service because of the high percentage of working men among the sailors; and the civilian strikes were continuing.²⁹⁶ Discipline seemed good, but was in many cases only external, correct in appearances only, because many men were suffering from a loss of morale.²⁹⁷

Of the other national minorities the navy was most closely concerned with the Finns, because their autonomy covered also the pilot and lighthouse service. The latter were put under the Russian navy ministry in 1912, with the consequent resignation of Finnish pilots and a heightened anti-Russian agitation in the Grand Duchy.

"The Finnish question is one of the gravest for the Russian chauvinists . . ."²⁹⁸

6.4. Coastal Defences

After Tsushima the Russian navy did not amount to much for many years. The old battleships remained in the Black Sea, of course. But only a few ships were stationed in the Baltic Sea, for instance, to serve in the patrol to prevent the Finns from smuggling weapons for their supposed rebellion in 1906—1907.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ "Rapport annuel" 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 b

²⁹⁷ "Renseignements généraux". Naval attaché to navy minister 27.X 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 c

²⁹⁸ "Service du pilotage de la Finlande". Naval attaché to navy minister 16/29 II 1912. SHM BB 7 n:o 121 k

M.J. Claire (consul in Helsinki) to Poincaré 17.VI 1912. SHM BB 7 n:o 121

²⁹⁹ Baltic squadron in 1906

20 torpedo cruisers

21 torpedo boats of 350 t

10 motor boats of 35 t

"Escadre de Defence de la Baltique". Naval attaché to navy minister 6.IV 1906. SHM BB 7 n:o 75—13

Black Sea fleet in 1906

Rostislav

Dvenacat' Apostolov battleships

Tri Svjatelija

Panteleimon

For several years only a few ships were added to the strength; they were the two pre-dreadnoughts which had been launched according to pre-war programmes.³⁰⁰ The Baltic fleet was looked upon mainly as a training squadron. But in the event of war it might have made a few raids on the German coast to make the Germans divide their forces instead of concentrating the whole of their fleet in the North Sea.³⁰¹

For several years coastal defence depended on army units, as has been made clear elsewhere in this work, so that two or three army corps were held in the vicinity of St. Petersburg, weakening the concentration of forces in the principal theatre of war. At first the line of defence ran from Kymijoki to Narva. In 1909 fortifications were started at Ino, near Terijoki to the north of Kronstadt, and at Krasnye Gorki.³⁰² (map 28)

Libau was abandoned. It had been a naval base for action on the oceans against England and/or Japan. But its passages tended to silt up, and it was much too close to the German

²⁹⁹ Continued

Tšesma with 600 convicts
Saratov with 60 convicts
transports and school ships
Očakov "excessively ill-used under the efemeral command of Lieutenant Schmidt".

"Quelques renseignements sur la Marine Russe en Mer Noire". 30. V 1906.
SHM BB 7 n:o 75—13

³⁰⁰ Baltic fleet in 1911

Battleship squadron
Tsesarevič battleships
Slava
Andrei Pervozvannyi
Imperator Pavel I
Rurik light cruiser

Cruiser squadron
Gromoboi
Bajan
Pallada
Admiral Makarov
4 torpedo boat divisions
6 submarines "of unsatisfactory construction" (1910)
6 minelayers
I reserve five old battleships
II reserve Imperator Alexander II

"Forces navales". Naval attaché to navy minister 26.III 1911. SHM BB 7 n:o 121 d

"Etat des sous-marins" 12.V 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 o

³⁰¹ "Rapport annuel" 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 b

³⁰² "Rapport annuel" 8.I 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 r

border and impossible of defence landwards unless fortifications were constructed with a radius of 12 kilometres and at a cost of hundreds of millions of roubles. The ancient fort at the mouth of the Duna was also declassified.³⁰³

However, in step with Russia's revival, the coastal defences on the Gulf on Finland were pushed westwards, to the line of Porkkala-Nargen, where powerful fortifications began to be built on the eve of the war (planned for completion in 1920). The main naval base was to be at Reval, with a supporting base for lighter forces at Sveaborg; Kronstadt was to remain the principal base for construction and major repairs. Flanking positions were planned in Moonsound and Åland or Hanko.³⁰⁴ As far as Åland was concerned, it had to be a floating base because of the difficulties arising from the demilitarization of the Islands, decreed in the Åland Convention in Paris in 1856.³⁰⁵

The summer manoeuvres of the Baltic fleet were always undertaken on the theme of the defence of the Gulf of Finland against superior forces, and were to prevent the enemy from taking possession of landing beaches. The destroyer and submarine flotillas, based at Helsinki and Reval, were in contact with observation posts, and were ready to proceed against the enemy. The torpedo boats practised attacks against armoured ships; the Finnish archipelago was an excellent shelter for them against pursuing cruisers.³⁰⁶

Watching the coasts caused much effort, the Finnish coasts "surprisingly much", it was admitted to the French attaché. That was because the coast line of Finland was exceptionally broken, with innumerable passages. A further reason was the lack of confidence of the imperial government in the loyalty of the Finns. That was why the navy ministry wanted to organize the coastal guard so as to be free from the influence of the Helsinki officials. The coast was divided into sectors, with headquarters in Reval, Kronstadt, and Sveaborg. These

³⁰³ "Rapport annuel" 1908. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 i
"Voyage à Libau". Naval attaché to navy minister 26.X 1909. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 d

³⁰⁴ "Rapport annuel" 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 b

³⁰⁵ Pertti Luntinen, The Åland Question During the Last Years of the Russian Empire. *The Slavonic and East European Review* 4/1976

³⁰⁶ "Rapport du fin de mission 1.II 1911". SHM BB 7 n:o 121 c

measures were an indication of the fear of a German landing on the coasts, threatening the capital, and which a non-existent Russian navy was unable to oppose.³⁰⁷

A similar organization of the coastal guard was centred at Sevastopol and Kertch.³⁰⁸ Otherwise, surprisingly little was reported in respect of precautions on the Black Sea. Apparently, the Turkish fleet was no menace comparable to the German one, nor could Russia be threatened so vitally on the Black Sea coast as it could in St. Petersburg.

All these measures of coastal defence were intended to be temporary, however, for Russia could not remain satisfied with her impotence at sea.

6.5. Naval Policy

After Tsushima there was much opposition against rebuilding the navy. It was believed that while the land troops were vital for Russia, a fleet was only a secondary element, and one in conflict with Russian tradition: the fleet had previously existed only for moving troops along the coasts, with the severe winters restricting its usefulness. The big navy of the turn of the century had been a luxury for the empire, a facade of might.³⁰⁹ The French *attaché* felt that in many political spheres people were convinced of the absolute futility of constructing powerful battleships for Russia; the money would be better used for the construction of railways, thus enabling the exploitation of Russia's resources.³¹⁰

But the emperor demanded a powerful navy worthy of the great empire and its world role. The foreign office was also interested in an ever growing navy as a factor enhancing the prestige of their diplomatists. The break-up of the Russo-

³⁰⁷ "Nouvelle organisation de la surveillance des côtes". Naval *attaché* to navy minister 5.III 1910.

³⁰⁸ = ³⁰⁷

³⁰⁹ "Rapport annuel" 17.IV 1908. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 i

³¹⁰ "Rapport annuel" 8.I 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 r

Austrian entente made the Black Sea fleet more important than earlier, while the question of keeping open the Danish Straits and remilitarising the Åland Islands made it important to make Russia's voice heard in the Baltic.³¹¹ Of course, the navy, with navy minister as its spokesman, demanded a powerful fleet of big ships, "demonstrating the vanity and amour-propre of the navy and the emperor", in the opinion of the critics. Russia did not want to be the only great power without Dreadnoughts.³¹² A League for the Restoration of the Navy — apparently modelled on the *Flottenverein* — had been founded in 1906 to propagate the idea of a powerful commercial and naval fleet.

"Its spirit of chauvinism and patriotic pride are laudable, but it desires a naval development incommensurate with the financial possibilities of the country and its political needs",

the attaché had to admit. The League was influential among Russian youth and especially among the naval circles and Duma representatives.³¹³

Naval opinion was that any system other than an open sea fleet for the defence of the coasts was an illusion. The light flotillas, the fixed defences, the batteries could only be auxiliaries for an active fleet, but were unable to replace it. Any attempt to defend the coast was foredoomed without mastery of the sea.

Manifold arguments were given for the great programme of naval rebuilding presented to the Duma. A mighty navy was the symbol of a great power, as Captain Mahan was preaching: it was not merely a question of prestige or amour-propre, but of concrete interests, of being heard when problems of vital concern to Russia were being discussed by the great powers. Further, though Russia was peaceful, peace was not dependent on Russia alone; therefore, she had to prepare for the worst. The Pacific and the Black Sea were not to be forgotten, but the mastery of the Baltic was decisive even in regard to the other

³¹¹ = 309

³¹² = 310

³¹³ "Ligue pour la renovation de la flotte". Naval attaché to navy minister 3.II 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 d

theatres of war, because it guaranteed Russia's political independence and the world peace, essential for her commercial, industrial, social, intellectual, and political development. It also ensured the dependence of the Baltic provinces and Finland, and was the supporting basis of Russia's historical interests in the East.

Russia must not neglect the development of her naval might while her neighbours were making such efforts to augment their naval armaments. Refusal would imply that Russia was continental power without maritime interests, or that she was unable to defend her vital interests.³¹⁴

The pre-eminence of the Baltic fleet reflected the consciousness of Germany as Russia's principal enemy. The French naval attaché sketched the eventual use of the navy in some detail: Sweden was flirting with Germany and was clearly inimical to Russia, as was proved by the anti-Russian tone of that country's naval propaganda. Then there were the separatist tendencies in Finland since 1905. It was understandable if Russia was seriously concerned about the northern Baltic Sea. The planned Russian Baltic fleet was to neutralize Swedish combinations with the Germans and the Finns, and to immobilize part of the German fleet in the Baltic Sea.

On the Black Sea Constantinople (i.e. the Straits) remained Russia's objective. There had been a moment during the Balkan wars when the conquest of the city (by the Bulgarians) had seemed imminent. The Russian Black Sea fleet had been animated with a desire to advance to the Straits,³¹⁵ but then maintenance of the status quo had been seen to be a more useful objective for Russia until she was further strengthened. Austria being Russia's principal opponent in the south, the French attaché hoped that the Russian fleet would help in neutralizing the Austrian fleet and thus aiding the French to win the domination of the Mediterranean.

The Russian role in the Pacific was much more modest than before the war, but the Russians had not given up their dreams.

³¹⁴ "Projet de loi sur le programme naval de la flotte Russe". Naval attaché to navy minister 26.III 1913.

³¹⁵ Naval attaché to navy minister 11.IV 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 c

It was proved by the voyage of a couple of gunboats along the north-east passage, and the idea of putting diesels in the new dreadnoughts to make possible the 18 000 sea-mile voyage without coaling, thus avoiding the nightmare of Rožestvenskii.³¹⁶

The ship-building programme was presented to the Duma as an answer to the German menace against the Russian capital and in the Baltic Sea at large. But in fact grand imperialist dreams in the Near East and the Far East were involved in the naval revival.

6.6. The Naval Convention Signed

The Dual Alliance again began to be strengthened in 1912, and one part of the process was the signing of a naval convention between France and Russia. This was analogous to the military convention, allowing for naval co-operation in case of war, and preparatory discussion between the naval chiefs of staff.³¹⁷

These discussions shed additional light on the ideas Russian admirals had for the use of their future armadas.

The first discussion was held in the summer 1912 between Prince Liewen and Admiral Aubert. Liewen explained that in a war against the Triple Alliance the first task of the Russian navy would be to secure the freedom of the Black Sea, in order to be able to transport supplies for the land operations. Losing mastery of the Black Sea would mean disastrous consequences for the outcome of the whole campaign. Russia always aimed at maintaining a naval superiority of one and a half times the Turkish fleet on the Black Sea. If the Italian and Austrian fleets should be immobilized by the French navy, Russia's prospects on the Black Sea would be good. The situation would be completely transformed if these enemies succeeded in passing the Straits with the connivance of the Turks.

³¹⁶ "Rapport annuel" 9.XII 1912. SHM BB 7 n:o 121 e

³¹⁷ Navy minister to MAE 10.II 1912. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41 "Projet de convention navale". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41, DDF III/3, n:o 206

The French admiral declared that it was the intention of the first French fleet to destroy or to blockade the enemy fleets in their Mediterranean bases. The French were going to prevent the Italian and Austrian fleets from concentrating their forces in the Ionian Sea; the enemy would not be able to reach the Dardanelles without being engaged in battle.

Aubert made one reservation, however. The Anglo-French entente might impose some other objective on his fleet, and therefore he was not able to promise unconditional help in the case of Austro-Italian action against the Dardanelles.

If Austria should act in concert with Turkey while Italy maintained an offensive against or a threatening posture towards France, the situation would be serious for the Russians, too. It would be difficult for the French to leave the western Mediterranean without being assured of Italian neutrality. But the very fact of the French fleet being concentrated at Bizerta might intimidate the Austrians from acting.

The Russians would be able to support the French in the Mediterranean only after passing the Straits and having secured their communications by occupying the coasts of the passage. This presupposed complete mastery of the Black Sea.

Thus, concentrating the French fleet at Bizerta was the practical measure that corresponded best to all hypotheses and agreed best with Russia's strategic interests.

In the north the Russians would not be able to engage in active operations until 1916 or 1917, when the new battleships should be completed. Therefore Liewen asked for a French demonstration on the Swedish coast, which would distract the Swedes from their schemes in Finland and would thus free the Russian army corps immobilized in the north. This the French admiral was not able to promise, having agreed with the British to concentrate the French navy in the Mediterranean, while the British operated in the Channel and in the North Sea.

The French attaché gathered some further information in St. Petersburg. It was learned that the Russians were going to employ their ancient cruisers and torpedo-boats to keep the Swedes respectful. The new battleships, when completed, would probably base their operations on Reval. Thus the Germans would have to divide their navy into two parts, one

against the Russians and the other against the British.³¹⁸

Prince Liewen sketched out also a plan of action should the Russian Baltic fleet not be engaged in the North and could be transferred elsewhere. The fleet would then act in the Mediterranean and needed a base there. Liewen asked whether Bizerta could be made available for the Russians. The French admiral was not too eager to promise this and saw some practical difficulties; but he did not refuse in principle.

In the Far East the Russian and French naval forces were found to be too weak and too far from each other to be able to take part in joint offensive action.³¹⁹ But "the hope of reconstructing the Pacific squadron remained anchored in the soul of Russian sailors and statesmen".³²⁰

Poincaré proposed that the naval convention should be incorporated in the diplomatic alliance, as the military convention had been incorporated in 1899 by an exchange of letters between Murav'ev and Delcassé. Sazonov accepted the proposal, and so did the emperor. The president of the council of ministers Kokovtsov saw only advantage in the approval of the naval convention by the governments, for otherwise

"these gentlemen (i.e. the admirals) are capable of reckless engagements. They talk and talk, not being preoccupied by financial or even diplomatic considerations. Now they have discussed Turkey, Sweden, and who knows what else. They will carry us too far".³²¹

Kokovtsov's words reflect the lack of coherent leadership in the "autocratic" Russian government. The principle of unified government, which Stolypin had tried to realize, did not work very well under Kokovtsov because of imperial obstruction. Military, naval, and diplomatic questions, being the prerogative of the emperor, in particular escaped Kokovtsov's control. Only

³¹⁸ "Premier échange de vues stratégiques entre les chefs d'état-major général de la marine impériale russe et le chef d'état-major de la marine française". Paris 6.VII 1912. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³¹⁹ = ³¹⁸

³²⁰ "Bulletin annuel" 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1539

³²¹ "Voyage de M. Poincaré en Russie août 1912. Entretien avec M. Sazonoff. Entretien avec M. Kokovtsov. Entretien avec l'Empereur". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41. DDF III/3. n:o 264

financial considerations compelled the respective ministers to take into account the opinion of the minister of finance and the Duma.

The naval convention was one additional fact convincing the Germans of the reality of the *Einkreisung*. The German fleet saluted the warship which carried Poincaré, thus demonstrating the fact that the French and the Russians were unable to communicate with each other without encountering German might. The German fleet was able to close or to open the Baltic route.³²² But the fact that they felt the need to demonstrate anything proved that

"Germany, notwithstanding her success, her wealth, her power, felt a parvenue in the society of nations".³²³

When the German ambassador asked for an explanation of the naval convention, he was told in effect that it was none of his business:

"Russia and France, being allies, have the right to preview all eventualities on land and sea, but nothing has been altered in the peaceful character of their alliance".³²⁴

Nicholas II was "too busy" to receive the ambassador.

6.7. Building Programmes

At first the Duma was reluctant to appropriate money for the notoriously corrupt naval administration. But as the navy was reformed, especially when Admiral Grigorovič was appointed navy minister in 1911; and as the financial situation of the imperial treasury improved, the estimates were increased. They increased at a faster rate than in other comparable powers:

³²² Ambassador in Berlin to MAE 17.VIII 1912. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³²³ Ambassador in Berlin to MAE 4. VIII 1912. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³²⁴ "Voyage de M. Poincaré . . . Entretien avec M. Sazonoff"

The Naval Estimates of some Principal Sea Powers

	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	
USA	518	638	712	683	658	.	.	million
Germany	348	424	504	542	563	580	.	roubles
France	312	320	334	371	412	426	.	
Russia	223	255	241	245	304	349	692	325

The technical committee of the Admiralty demanded mighty armoured ships of 20 000 tons as early as 1906.³²⁶ The German firm Blohm & Voss was left out of account through French protests, and the ships were planned by the Italian constructor Admiral Cuniberti, father of the dreadnought idea. They were built in Russia by Russian workmen and with Russian materials.³²⁷ The ships were much more expensive for Russia than for the other powers because of the feeble productivity of Russian labour and the dependence on foreign parts and expertise.³²⁸ They were also very slow in building, because the technical committee kept modifying the plans, and because of Russian sloth, lack of energy, numerous church holidays, and general inefficiency, as well as continuous corruption.³²⁹

In the year 1909 four dreadnoughts of 23 000 tons were laid down in the Baltic (the "Gangut"-class) and in 1911 three similar battleships (of 22 800 tons) for the Black Sea as an answer to the Turkish naval programme.³³⁰ These plans presupposed enlarging the building slips and docks in St. Petersburg, Kronstadt, Sevastopol, and Nikolaev. Also a floating base for Åland was ordered, to consist of seven transports for various purposes.³³¹ In 1912 Admiral Grigorovič

³²⁵ "Bulletin annuel" 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1539

³²⁶ "Constructions neuves". Naval attaché to navy minister 16.XI 1906. SHM BB 7 n:o 75—13

³²⁷ "Constructions neuves". Naval attaché to navy minister 21.IX 1908. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 f

³²⁸ "Bulletin annuel" 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1539

³²⁹ "Recapitulation" 1909. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 f

"Discussion du budget au conseil de l'empire". Naval attaché to navy minister 21.IV 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120

³³⁰ "Rapport annuel" 1.I 1911. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 r

"Au sujet des constructions navales" Naval attaché to navy minister 8.IX 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 o

³³¹ "Budget naval demandé pour 1908". Naval attaché to navy minister 24.I 1907. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 c

"Crédits de la Marine et constructions navales". Naval attaché to navy minister 19.VIII 1908. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 c. "Bases flottantes". Naval attaché to navy minister 4.II 1908. SHM BB 7 n:o 75 f

succeeded in obtaining the sanction of the Duma for four battlecruisers of 32 000 tons (the "Borodino"-class), with light cruisers, destroyers, and submarines.³³² This "small programme" was to be completed by 1917. It was only a first step towards the mighty Russian fleet, as its very name suggests,³³³ but in 1917 the empire would already have had "a respectable embryo fleet".³³⁴

The "grand programme" was presented and accepted in 1913—1914. By 1924 the Baltic fleet was to consist of two squadrons of battleships and a division of battlecruisers, 24 dreadnoughts in all. By 1930 there was to be 24 superdreadnoughts of 31 000—34 000 tons, and twelve dreadnoughts in reserve squadrons, in all 36 big ships. Four ships were to be launched annually, battleships and battlecruisers alternatingly. The battle squadrons were to be

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- ³³² "Rapport annuel, Matériel militaire". SHM BB 7 n:o 75 i
 "Sous-marins de haute mer russes". Naval attaché to navy minister 28.VIII 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 o
 "Sous-marins defensifs". Naval attaché to navy minister 12.V 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 o
 "Note sur l'état des constructions neuves en Russie". Naval attaché to navy minister 21.II 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 o
- ³³³ The Russian naval plans are dealt with in detail by Petrov, *Podgotovka . . .*, and Šacillo, *Russkii imperialism*

³³⁴ Projected Russian fleet in 1917

Baltic fleet

2 battleships	17,300 t.	(pre-dreadnoughts)
4 battleships	23,000	(Ganguts)
2 battleships	13,500	(old?)
4 battle cruisers	32,000	(Borodinos)
1 cruiser	18,000	
3 cruisers	8,000	(Bajans)
4 cruisers	6,000	
37 destroyers	1,200 — 1,300 t	
"numerous" —" —"	400 — 600 t	

Black Sea fleet

3 battleships	13,000 t	(pre-dreadnoughts)
3 battleships	22,800	
2 cruisers	6,700	
2 cruisers	6,000	
9 destroyers	1,000	
18 torpedo-boats	380 — 600 t	
12 submarines	600 — 700 t	

"Rapport annuel" 9.XII 1912. SHM BB n:l 121 e

accompanied by 28 light cruisers, 116 destroyers, and 39 submarines.³³⁵

The programme for the Black Sea was not as closely detailed; it was only decided that the Black Sea fleet was to be one and a half times stronger than all other Black Sea fleets put together.³³⁶ The Balkan wars and Turkey's intention to have dreadnoughts built in England caused some anxiety in Russia, because her ships could not be constructed with equal speed. Hence it was proposed to buy the Turkish and even Brazilian ships then being built in England. Nothing came of the scheme.³³⁷ (The ships served eventually with the Grand Fleet in 1914—1918). Only six cruisers of 8000 tons were intended for the Pacific, plus gunboats for the Amur river flotilla.

By the end of 1913 the Ganguts and the Borodinos were under construction,³³⁸ the work proceeding "painfully slowly".

³³⁵ Projected Russian fleet in 1924

16 battleships + 2 pre-dreadnoughts in reserve
8 battle cruisers + "Rurik" in reserve
16 light cruisers + 3 in reserve
90 torpedo boats
36 submarines

Projected Russian fleet in 1930

16 battleships (superdreadnoughts)
8 battleships in reserve (dreadnoughts)
8 battlecruisers
4 battlecruisers in reserve (Borodinos)
16—20 light cruisers
8—12 light cruisers in reserve
78—80 destroyers
36—45 destroyers in reserve
24—27 submarines
12—15 submarines in reserve

"Projet de loi sur le programme naval de la flotte Russe". Naval attaché to navy minister 26.III 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 b

Naval budget for 1914

4 Ganguts	14 million roubles
4 Borodinos	66 million roubles
3 Black Sea ships	39 million roubles

Total cost of the grand programme 4,500,000,000 francs

"Les constructions navales en 1914". Naval attaché to navy minister 3/16.X 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 b

³³⁶ = ³³⁵

³³⁷ "Au sujet des achats de cuirasses en Angleterre". Naval attaché to navy minister 9/22.II 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 e

³³⁸ "Rapport annuel" 1913. SHM BB 7 n:o 122 b

The cruisers and destroyers were hardly laid down, the main effort being concentrated on the big ships. Only a couple of cruisers, a few destroyers and submarines were launched and entered into service before the war. The first Ganguts were completed in 1914 but the Borodinos never.

Thus the "grand imperial navy" remained mainly on paper, and its main importance lies in the illustration it provided of Russia's imperial plans and hopes. The giant ships were designed to show the cross of St. Andreas in the distant oceans, they would probably not have been appropriate to the confined waters of the Baltic Sea, not to speak of the Gulf of Finland.

7. Preparing for the Great War

7.1. The Dual Alliance Revitalized

In August 1911 Generals Žilinskiĭ and Dubail had discussed the military convention at the usual annual meeting. The Russian chief of staff had tried to reassure his colleague that Russian support for France was certain, that the emperor was not going back on his word.³⁴⁰ But much anxiety was caused by Potsdam, by the Moroccan crisis, and by the Balkan events, and new exertions were needed before the Dual Alliance was definitely repaired.

As a reaction to German behaviour in the Moroccan crisis a national revival was felt in France from 1911 onwards. Poincaré, an Alsatian, was made prime minister and then president of the republic. Delcassé was appointed navy minister and then ambassador to St. Petersburg. The army got a competent leader in Joffre, and the three-year service law of 1913 increased its effectives by a third.

Poincaré visited Russia in the spring of 1912. He had with him a paper sketching the outline of the military situation as the French general staff saw it, to be used as a guide for his discussions with the Russians. The generals wrote that the Germans were well aware of the difficulties the Russians faced in making an offensive. They also knew that they had no hope

³⁴⁰ "Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 18/31 août 1911 entre les chefs de l'état-major généraux des armées française et russe". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 40. DDF XIV/2 n:o 232

of decisive results from a German attack on Russia. The Germans had learned of the French decision to attack the Rhine with all their available forces immediately after the declaration of war. They had probably calculated the political and military consequences of the first battle, i.e. the attitude of Belgium, England, and Italy. It was absolutely against German military doctrine to disperse their forces. That is why they had decided to attack France first and in full force. It was a fact that they were only leaving on their eastern frontier a minimal force, incapable of taking the offensive.

The information received indicated that Russia was preparing for a battle against both Germany and Austria simultaneously. But Russia was an ally of France. It was in the interest of both countries to fight the principal enemy with united strength, in order not to get beaten separately, one after the other. France was not able to choose the moment of battle; she had to fight immediately and with full force. Consequently it was of primordial importance for Russia to act simultaneously with France. Even operations of secondary importance could be decisive on condition that they were immediate.

Of course, Russia had her problems: the size of the empire, its sparse communications, the form of the Polish salient. But the offensive need not be very powerful at the start. Dragomirov had been of the opinion that Russia had to act immediately whatever the dangers and material results. It was of the utmost importance to make the Germans believe in the seriousness of the attack and thereby to compel them to divide their forces at the beginning of the war. Even preparations that made an immediate Russian attack seem probable might suffice for this result.³⁴¹

These arguments were not new. What was new was the urgency with which they were presented. Of course, Poincaré was not able to move the Russian colossus at once, on his first visit. But these arguments were repeated on every occasion and little by little they had their effect, in time for the great war — or, of course, one might say that they had their effect in making the great war break out.

³⁴¹ "Note remise au président du conseil le 3 avril 1912 à l'occasion de son voyage en Russie". EMATSH 7 N 1538

Joffre and Žilinskiĭ, the chiefs of the general staffs, took up the discussion of the technical details. First of all they agreed that the term "defensive war" in the convention did not imply a war to be waged defensively. On the contrary, it was absolutely necessary to attack vigorously, and as simultaneously as possible. As always, the defeat of the German army was stated to be the principal aim of the alliance. The German mobilization was to be followed by an instantaneous and simultaneous mobilization in France and in Russia without further consultation; but such a consultation would be necessary before an Austrian or Italian mobilization was answered by a French and Russian mobilization.

Joffre insisted that it was the German intention to attack France first, leaving only a minimum of forces in the east. Germany had the greatest interest in being able to fight France first, and only then Russia. The allies had to prevent this by a simultaneous attack from two directions. The French general staff had left only a minimum of troops to guard the Alpine passages — Italy was at this time engaged in a war with Turkey — and concentrated the mass of their army on the German frontier. Its numbers surpassed the 1,300,000 men promised in 1892. The French railways were being improved in order to win an advantage of one or two days over the German troop concentrations.

Žilinskiĭ accepted all this, but then he remarked that Austria had remarkably improved her military ability and perfected her railways with an obvious offensive intention. Russia could not afford to expose herself to defeat in the Austrian theatre of war. The moral effect would be disastrous. She had to leave a considerable part of her forces on the southern front. And then, while Sweden had earlier adopted an attitude of wait and see in order to join the winning party at a favourable moment, she had lately been incited by Germany and would probably march against Russia with the Germans. That was why Russia had to keep in Finland and in St. Petersburg considerably more troops than had been deemed necessary earlier. The construction of railways in Asia Minor also allowed the Turks to accelerate their mobilization and troop concentration. Consequently Russia had to maintain large garrisons on her Turkish borders.

But after repeating these old arguments against concentrating all forces on the German front, Žilinskiĭ went on

to say that the Russian general staff had resolutely decided to attack Germany with at least 800,000 men. And the offensive was to be felt by the Germans after the fifteenth day.

Joffre remarked that the German defeat would dispel all concern about Swedish or Turkish action, and he again stressed the need to concentrate all efforts against the principal enemy. He also emphasized the necessity to improve the Russian strategic railways so as to accelerate troop concentration. He approved of the plan to put the centre of gravity of the Russian armies close to Warsaw, which would allow an attack towards Allenstein if the Germans were deployed in East Prussia, or an operation on the left bank of the Vistula if the enemy was in the region of Thorn-Posen.³⁴²

Of course, Žilinskii's promise did not mean that 800,000 men were to attack on the fifteenth day — the attack was only to be felt by the Germans after the fifteenth day. And, as will be recounted later, there was plenty to wish for and to revise in the plans for troop concentration and railway construction before the French could be satisfied. The emphasis on the Austrian, Turkish, and Swedish danger remained in spite of all French efforts to dispel Russian apprehensions by the argument that the first battle would solve all difficulties.

But Žilinskii had agreed on the importance of simultaneous action against Germany. The Dual Alliance had thus returned to the harmony of Obručev's and Boisdeffre's days. This was no one-sided victory of the French over the Russians. Concentrating against the principal enemy made military sense to the Russian generals, too.

7.2. The Problem of Wartime Communication Between the Allies

From the very beginning of the alliance the problem of wartime communication between France and Russia had been discussed.

³⁴² "Prochès-verbal de l'entretien du 13 juillet 1912, entre les chefs d'état-major des armées française et russe". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

It was obviously important for information on the German army and German war plans to be exchanged between the allies. It was especially important for the Russians to be able to know at the earliest moment whether the principal German offensive was to be directed against France or Russia.

Various means of communication were proposed: pigeons, emissaries, agents in neutral countries, and the telegraph cable. But the problem was that Germany and her allies were situated between Russia and France, and the flanking neutrals, Sweden-Norway, Denmark, Greece, and Turkey, were more or less under German influence, or anyway unable to resist German pressure, in the opinion of the Russian generals.³⁴³

Experiments were made with pigeons, on the line Karlskrona—Libau and Karlskrona—Copenhagen. Only 8 pigeons out of 65 arrived at the destination. It was concluded that over the long sea stretches only pigeons of strong muscle could be trusted. A pigeon station was planned in Esbjerg and a Russian consulate was to be established there to act as a cover. The cost of the total line from Libau to Dunkirk was estimated at 500 000 francs. But the ultimate outcome of these experiments and discussions was that communication by pigeon-post was found to be unsatisfactory.³⁴⁴

A cable link was then envisaged. A plan for a special cable from France by the western side of England to Archangel was studied.³⁴⁵ By 1901 opinion leaned in favour of an alternative plan of a cable being layed from Bizerta to Sevastopol. There was to be a cable station at Ergasteria (Greece), and if England remained neutral in the war, the cable would be safe. But continuing the cable through the Straits was highly problematical. And English neutrality was by no means certain at this time. Other means had to be found.³⁴⁶

³⁴³ "Communication entre la France et la Russie" s.d. EMATSH 7 N 1507

³⁴⁴ "Communications par pigeons voyageurs entre la Russie et la France". Moulin 20.VI 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

"Au sujet des communications entre la France et la Russie". Moulin 24.IX 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

"Sur la communication par pigeons-voyageurs avec la Russie". Moulin 10.XII 1898. EMATSH 7 N 1475

³⁴⁵ = ³⁴³

³⁴⁶ "Procès-verbal de l'entretien 8/20 II 1901 entre les chefs d'état-major généraux des armées française et russe". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 35

An aerial connection was proposed; aerostations (equipped with dirigible balloons?) were to be constructed. This proposal does not seem to have resulted in anything.³⁴⁷

The key to the solution of the problem lay in the development of wireless telegraphy. At the meeting of the chiefs of staff in 1907 it was suggested that wireless links might be set up from French North Africa to Minsk, Novo-Georgievsk, and Sevastopol.³⁴⁸ At the meeting in 1909 the lack of a wireless telegraphy was discussed anew. The French spoke strongly as Palicyn had wanted in this as well as in the railway question mentioned earlier. "The French general staff was unable to understand" that a problem discussed two years previously had not been advanced to the arrangement of the details for the installation of wireless stations. "The French general staff expects the realization of these requests which they had repeated many times, with an impatience which is more than legitimate"; they "demand emphatically that the Russian government speed up the solution as much as possible".³⁴⁹

The wireless stations were then built and by 1912—1913 communication was functioning satisfactorily. Daily wireless contact was held between Paris—Bobruisk and Bizerta—Sevastopol. The Eiffel Tower—Sveaborg link was experimented with and it was found that the Sveaborg station had to be made more powerful. New powerful stations were being built on the Black Sea coast. Wireless stations in Montenegro and Norway were discussed, but came to nothing.

By this time England was no longer a potential enemy. Her cables could be used for communication in case of war. The telegraph connection was to run from Paris through England to America, Australia, and Zanzibar, or through South Africa to Zanzibar and from there to Odessa. The British had suggested a line through Bombay and Teheran to Russia, but the Russians insisted on Odessa. The document does not indicate how the Turkish area was to be cleared.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ = 346

³⁴⁸ "Procès-verbal . . . 31/18.VII 1907". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 38

³⁴⁹ "Procès-verbal . . . 24/11.IX 1908". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 39

³⁵⁰ "Procès-verbal . . . 13.VII 1912". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

"Communications entre la France et la Russie, Juillet 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1538

Correspondence through emissaries was organized, too. Messages were to be sent by telegraphy to London and from there to the Scandinavian countries, from which officer emissaries were to carry them to Russia.³⁵¹

Thus it was not until the years 1912—1913 that the Russians could be confident in knowing whether the Germans were attacking France by the time the Russians were to start their own promised offensive against Germany.

7.3. The Russian Army in 1912

Colonel Matton was replaced by General Laguiche in 1912, because Germany was represented by a general in St. Petersburg. Laguiche did not know Russian, but he was aided by Captain Wehrlin who did. In addition a horde of young captains were commanded to Russia to study in the military academy, to visit the military districts, or to observe the manoeuvres. They sent in batches of information to Paris during the years 1912—1914.

The numerical strength of the Russian army was impressive.

The Numerical Strength of the Russian army in 1912

active troops	1 230 000 men	
reserve	3 675 000	
militia, trained	828 000	
Cossack I	60 000	
Cossack II	50 000	
Cossack III	53 000	
Cossack reserve	53 000	
militia I, untrained	3 345 000	
militia II, untrained	5 016 000	352

The effectives in active service in 1913

service class of 1910	436 000 men
1911	423 000
1912	435 000

³⁵² = 350

³⁵² "Notice sur l'armée Russe, Mars 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1538

in all	1 303 000	
of whom in the		
navy	42 000	
frontier guards	56 000	
thus left in the army	1 286 000	
of whom in Asia	240 000	353

Of the annual class of 1 200 000 men Russia thus conscripted rather fewer than 450 000 recruits for the three years of active service in the infantry or artillery, for the four years in other army branches, or the five years in the navy. Volunteer students could be trained as reserve officers. After the active period the men served 7 years in the first reserve and the 7—8 years in the second reserve and finally 5 years in the militia. Sailors did five years of reserve service only. The Cossacks went through one preparatory year, four years in active units, eight years on leave of absence, five years in the reserve, and finally ten years in the militia.

The peacetime infantry units were kept at half the wartime strength. Infantry units had to mobilize themselves if war broke out, and in addition they had to mobilize their supply formations and reserve units. The covering troops on the western border were up to three-fifths or three-quarters of their combat strength, and mobilized only themselves in the event of war. After the reform of 1910 the rule of accepting only 25 % of local national minorities referred solely to the peacetime strength.

The four youngest reserve classes (of about 400 000 men each) were enough to make up the active army at mobilization. The rest were left for the reserve divisions.

When mobilization occurred, the telegram would be seen by the reservists on the second day at the latest. After that the men would gather at their collection points, and from there they would be transported to their units. Infantry and artillery would be mobilized between third-ninth day (exceptionally by the fifteenth day), reserve troops between the ninth-fifteenth day (exceptionally by the twenty-eighth day).

The railway transport from Moscow to Brest took three to

³⁵³ "Conférences sur l'armée Russe faites par le capitaine Mahon 1913".
EMATSH 7 N 1506

five days, from Kazan to Warsaw eight days. One army corps needed 128—142 trains, and while one double line carried 32 trains a day, the corps would occupy the line for four days, and much more where the line was a single-track one, allowing 8—16 trains only. Because there were too few lines leading to the western frontier, several corps had to use one line. Thus the concentration would take from three to four weeks.³⁵⁴

The Russian infantry amounted to 1260 battalions of 800 rifles. They were organized in 70 divisions and 17 rifle brigades of 16 or 8 battalions. The cavalry consisted of 877 squadrons and sotnias of 128 sabres, organized in 24 divisions and 8 brigades. There were 640 batteries of eight or six guns in the artillery. The various services were united in army corps consisting usually of two infantry divisions, sometimes with an additional rifle brigade; a cavalry division; two artillery brigades or 12 field batteries and a few heavy guns; and a sapper battalion.

An example of the battle strength of a Russian army corps

24 squadrons	3,072 sabres
32 battalions	25,600 rifles
12 field batteries	96 cannons
	12 mortars
	72 machine guns
3 heavy batteries	24 cannons
1 sapper battalion	

There were 27 army corps in European Russia, three corps in Caucasia, two in Turkestan, and five in Siberia. Each army corps was to mobilize itself and in addition a division of first and a division of second reserve.

An army consisted of 3—5 corps, with one brigade of heavy artillery, one pontoon battalion, railway battalion(s), a wireless company, a balloon detachment and a squadron of gendarmes. These grand units did not exist in peacetime. The army staffs were to be formed out of the military district staffs during the mobilization.

Local brigades and commandants were charged with the task of keeping an eye on the recruits and reservists. The militia formed 20 mixed divisions on mobilization (4 regiments, 1

³⁵⁴ Capitaine Wehrlin; "Les caractéristiques de l'armée Russe 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1535

artillery group, 1 cavalry regiment, 1 sapper company) from the first call-up and 20 divisions from the second call-up.

In addition there were 54 000 frontier guards. They served under the command of the ministry of finance, which was charged with the customs and frontier establishment. The guards in Manchuria were organized militarily, their numbers equalling that of an army corps.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Note sur l'action militaire de la Russie en Europe, août 1912-Mars 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41
Tables by Wehrlin, "Les caractéristiques . . ." = 354

Effectives in Russian army units

battalion	800 rifles	
rifle regiment	1,600 rifles	2 battalions
infantry regiment	3,200 rifles	4 battalions
	4 machine guns	
squadron	128 sabres	
cavalry regiment	768	6 squadrons
battery	8 cannons	
artillery group	24	3 batteries
artillery brigade	48	6 batteries
infantry division		4 regiments
rifle brigade		4 rifle regiments
cavalry division		24 squadrons or sotnias
		3 cavalry regiments and
		1 Cossack regiment
cavalry brigade		2 regiments

The strength of the active Russian army in 1912

in Europe	53	divisions (47 infantry 3 Guards 3 Grenad)
Caucasia	6	
Siberia	11	
Europe	9	rifle brigades
Caucasia	2	
Turkestan	6	
Europe	19	cavalry divisions (incl. 2 Cossack div.)
	4	cavalry brigades
Caucasia	4	cavalry divisions (incl. 3 Cossack div.)
Turkestan	1	cavalry division
	2	Cossack brigades
Siberia	2	Cossack brigades
	449	field batteries
	53	horse batteries
	46	mountain batteries
	71	mortar batteries
	21	heavy batteries
Kronstadt	6	fortress artillery battalions
Vladivostok	12	
European frontiers	38	

The troops were armed with the 7.62 mm rifle of the 1891 model and the light cannon of 76.2 mm. The cavalry fought with sabre and carabine, the Cossacks had their lance. A novelty was the machine gun. In the Manchurian war they had nominally had one company of eight machine guns for each division or brigade, and six machine guns for each cavalry regiment; in practice all units had not received these new weapons. By 1906 nominal strength was 4 machine guns for each regiment, and from 1911 onwards one company for each regiment.³⁵⁶ This was much less than the Germans had when the war began.

Another novelty, in respect of which the experience of the Far East war had proved useful, was the adoption of a uniform in protective colouring. One such was being adopted by most armies, but the French could not understand it:

"Evidently, the soldier is not visible, but when all

³⁵⁵ Continued

Caucasia	5	fortress artillery battalions	
Turkestan	1		
	39	sapper battalions	
	9	pontoon battalions	
	16	balloon detachments	
	13	railway battalions	
	7	wireless companies	
	4	siege detachments	
	17	fortress sapper companies	
	16	mine companies	
	13	telegraphy companies	
	11	pigeon stations	
The military districts			
in Europe		St. Petersburg	
		Vilna	
		Warsaw	
		Kiev	
		Odessa	
		Moscow	
		Kazan	27 army corps
Caucasia			3
Turkestan			2
in Siberia	Omsk	I division	16 batls.
	Irkutsk	II corps	32
		III	32
	Amur	I	32 in Nikolaevsk
		IV	32 Vladivostok
		V	32 Habarovsk
			5 army corps

³⁵⁶ "Mitralleuses". 9. II 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1539

armies have adopted it, there are bound to occur innumerable and demoralizing mistakes. It seems better not to proceed too fast in this direction . . ."³⁵⁷

There was something untraditional and unmilitary in the drab dress. And it is true that the French *poilus* were easily distinguished by the German machine gunners in August 1914. Of course, enough Russians were killed in spite of their protective colouring.

A totally new branch of military service was aviation. By March 1912 there were 7 balloon companies in European Russia, 1 in Caucasia, and 4 in Siberia. Great dirigible balloons were being constructed in 1912 and 1913. There were aviation schools in Hatšina and Sevastopol, and aviation companies of 7 squadrons each in St. Petersburg, Kiev, and Sevastopol. Each squadron consisted of eight aeroplanes, and more were being constructed. Three factories in St. Petersburg were building Nieuport-, Farman-, Hanriot-, and Voisin-types. Combined manoeuvres had taken place with aeroplanes and ships, although without decisive results.³⁵⁸ Sikorsky had constructed his giant "Ilja Muromec". This grandfather of all strategic bombers carried 1000 kg of bombs but flew only 75 km/h.³⁵⁹

The general impression received by the French observers was that

"the Russian army seems, in its present state, able to fight successfully against its eventual enemies. The Russian soldier is first class, tough, well trained, disciplined, and devoted. The immense majority of the army is animated by an excellent spirit . . . It could be among the first armies of the world if it were able to take all advantage of the excellent elements it has. But the natural unconcern of the Slav character has let bad habits seep into the army. There is much good will to regain the distance lost in the war of 1904—1905, but it is frustrated by

³⁵⁷ "Rapport du capitaine Marchal, stagiaire dans l'armée Russe en 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1486

³⁵⁸ "Bulletin annuel 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1539

³⁵⁹ "Aerostations, Automobiles, TSF 1906—1914". EMATSH u N 1540

the absence of method, useless employment of men and resources . . ."³⁶⁰

Perhaps the observers, guests of the army, were too polite to report on the widespread misuse of alcohol which seems to have been one of the worst failings of the officer corps.³⁶¹

Many problems remained. "The high command is being rejuvenated", ran the French report, but the new commanders came from the old schools, the Guards and the general staff. The staff officers were "intelligent and diligent men, but with little experiment of troop command, office workers rather than field officers". Regimental officers were often without orders, they lacked initiative, and went by regulations and habits.³⁶²

The immense number of men withdrawn from training into the supply services was also noted: hardly 10 % of the effectives appeared on the training ground. The fighting troops had to give up men for many essential services — the secretariat, the medical services, the upkeep of armament and equipment as well as of the barracks.³⁶³

Much work was being done to create a clear doctrine of war for the whole of the Russian army, and inspiration was sought in German and French ideas:

"They have not enough confidence in themselves. They are inclined to have an exaggerated idea of the value of the German army, which they are too eager to copy. Thereby their morale suffers and they tend to assume a defensive attitude . . ."³⁶⁴

It is no wonder that the main defect of Russia's military might, her incapacity to wage a prolonged war, due to industrial and social backwardness, was not noted by the observers. A long war was not expected by anyone. The experiences of the USA

³⁶⁰ "Rapport du capitaine Perchement à la suite du stage accompli dans la circonscription de Vilna d'Avril à Octobre 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1486

³⁶¹ John Bushnell, *The Tsarist Officer Corps 1881—1914; Customs, Duties, Inefficiency. The American Historical Review*, Oct 1981, p. 754—780

³⁶² "Rapport du capitaine Perchement . . ." and "Rapport sommaire du Capitaine Perchement" 10.X 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1486

³⁶³ = ³⁶²

³⁶⁴ "Rapport sommaire du capitaine Marchal, stagiaire dans l'armée Russe, circonscription du Moscou, de 1^e Avril au 1^e Octobre 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1486

in the Civil War years of 1861—1865 or Russia in 1904—1905 were not taken in account, because these were non-European wars. The lightning Prussian wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870—1871 were the relevant models. The observes, French staff officers, had received no training in economic warfare or observing social phenomena, of course. They prepared for the one great battle at the opening of the war.

They did notice the threat to discipline caused by the revolutionary epidemic. In their opinion it especially contaminated the technical services. They reported on the naval mutinies of 1912, (p. 149) and commented:

"In spite of the official silence, and affirmations in the press that the crews are completely calm, there are serious reasons for apprehension . . ." ³⁶⁵

But these disorders in the fleet and in some engineer units

"must not be given more importance than they deserve. They were due to particular reasons, mainly to the social origins of the rebels, most of whom are factory workers." ³⁶⁶

It seems that even workers were held to be outsiders, like Jews, whose malcontent was not to be taken as a proof that there was something thoroughly wrong with Russia.

7.4. The Problem of the Nationalities Still Unresolved

The national minorities of Russia — Poles, the various Finnish tribes, Letts, Tartars, Jews, Germans, Armenians, Persians, Gypsies, Greeks, etc. etc. — consisted more than 30 % of the population. The French observers seem to have come to the conclusion that the national minorities caused more problems to Russian army than did the revolutionaries.

³⁶⁵ "Bulletin annuel 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1539

³⁶⁶ "Rapport du capitaine Perchement . . ." = ³⁶²

"The result of this ethnic diversity is that Russia, in spite of her strong political organization, lacks unity... The Russian race proper — the Great Russians, the White Russians, and the Little Russians or Ukrainians — which forms two-thirds of the population, is thus encircled by a cordon of other nationalities, sometimes loyal or indifferent, but sometimes hostile or even dangerous".

That was the reason for the rule that all units must consist at least three-quarters of Russians, and the remaining quarter must not be all composed of the same minority race; and that the natives of a border region must serve their time far from their province of origin. Thus military service was intended as an instrument for Russifying the various elements.

The Poles were always a problem. Regiments in the Polish salient consisted nearly exclusively of Russians. There were few Poles and no Jews. But the greater part of the reservists to be called up in the event of a mobilization were Poles. The officers of these units were apprehensive, and asked themselves whether the Russian core was strong enough to absorb the Polish contingent of up to 80 reservists per company. After the reform of 1905 a Russo-Polish detente had seemed possible, but the favourable attitude (of the Poles or Russians? or both?) did not last long. "At present we (the Poles) live under a regime of perpetual tracasserie". The Russians for their part "don't express any sympathy towards their Polish subjects". The Poles regarded the Russian army as wretched and had a low opinion of the Russians from the point of view of morals, corruption etc., "but they are blinded by hate, having nothing to envy the Russians in this respect"³⁶⁷.

There were Austrian and German Poles in the enemy armies, and the enemy itself, Austria or Germany, was not antipathetic to the Poles. "During the Bosnian crisis they would have greeted the Austrians with an open heart". Germany did not enjoy so great a sympathy in Poland, but she was admired because of her might and commercial and military prestige.

The sympathy of the Jews was without reserve on the side of Germany. The Russians and sometimes also the Poles had a

³⁶⁷ "Rapport du capitaine Marchal" (= ³⁵⁷), annexe 6.

profound contempt for them, but they could not live without the Jews, because without them the country could not be run.

"Certainly the influence of this element is not to be despised because of the embarrassments of all kinds that it may create for the Russians. I have heard from a reliable source that in case of a war certain railway lines would be destroyed by the Jews".

A glimpse of the conditions the Jews had to live in can be seen in this description of Poland as a theatre of war:

"Only the dwellings of the Christian population can be counted on (for billeting and feeding the troops), because the houses of the Jews are so crowded and so filthy, and their food is so miserable, even in the great cities, that quartering troops in the Jewish sections is absolutely impossible".³⁶⁸

French commentators were well aware, too, that the situation in Finland was a cause for serious concern. The Finns were still not Russified by national service.

"The population of Finland, although forming part of the Russian empire, according to the 1809 peace treaty of Fredrikshamn, does not perform any military service, paying instead the contribution of the 'military millions' to the Russian treasury".³⁶⁹

It was decided to transfer two parishes on the Russian border from the administration of the Grand Duchy to the Government of St. Petersburg because they were in the district of the new coastal fortifications. This caused an uproar in the Finnish opinion. The French observer commented:

"It is of no importance to us who is right, but the fact is that because of two parishes this country is in a state of intensive agitation, and in the event of a war should need two army corps to maintain her in submission. A friend of mine, a general, who had visited Abo, said to me that his Swedish friends had

³⁶⁸ = ³⁶⁷

³⁶⁹ "Conférences sur l'armée Russe faites par le Capitaine Mahon 1913".
EMATSH 7 N 1506

to accompany him on his walk to avoid his being insulted by the Finns. This is an example of the sentiments of this population, which is renowned for its brutal obstinacy”.

Of course, the Russian government had no intention of considering the restitution of Finnish autonomy, and the whole of the Viipuri government was decided to be put under direct Russian administration. Thus the situation remained precarious. Colonel Janin continues:

”The agitation seems unlikely to calm down, on the contrary. It is the Finnish blood that is to be let first, said a well-connected general of the Guards”.³⁷⁰

The Finnish question, as we have seen, was linked up in the Russian mind with the Swedish threat.

7.5. A Catalogue of Enemies

Sweden was afraid of a Muscovite offensive to the northern Atlantic. That is why the Swedish army was modernized, the northern border of the country fortified at Boden, and the navy strengthened, with a national subscription because the government and the *Riksdag* were not generous enough. The Russification of Finland was seen as the first step in Russia’s march to the Atlantic.³⁷¹

From the St. Petersburg horizon these Swedish preparations seemed in turn an indication of offensive intentions. The Russians knew that Denmark and Norway were not able to defend themselves against German pressure. Germany was known to be dreaming of a northern Germanic union, which would give her twelve million new subjects of a superior race, the Norwegian fjords, the Baltic Straits, and Swedish military strength. Denmark and Norway had only about 60 000 men

³⁷⁰ Janin to Vignal 15—18.IX 1911. EMATSH 7 N 1485

³⁷¹ M. Clause, chargé d’affaires á Stockhol to Pichon 14.I 1911. EMATSH 7 N 1544

each in their armed forces, but the Swedish army consisted of six active divisions or 120 000 men with additional local units for defence.

It was believed that the Swedish army was going to invade Finland while the mass of the Russian army was engaged elsewhere, thereby creating a diversion in the north and menacing the Russian capital. Germany was known to have promised the restitution of Finland to Sweden at the end of the war.³⁷²

”The Russian government does not ignore the fact that an alleged secret treaty exists between Sweden and Germany.”

That was one of the reasons for reinforcing the Russian Baltic fleet.³⁷³ It was also the reason why Russia would dearly have loved to ignore the prohibition of 1856, which prevented her from occupying or fortifying the Åland Islands against a Swedish attack or as a base for Russian operations. But Swedish and British protests had forced Russia to give up her attempt in 1907 to occupy the islands under the pretext of watching the revolutionary smuggling of weapons on the Baltic Sea.

The northern menace was one of the main reasons for constructing the fortifications on the coasts of the Gulf of Finland mentioned earlier, as well as for several naval plans. Swedish animosity gave credence to the wildest reports of the supposed Finnish rebellion. The worst consequence of the northern menace was the fact that Russia had to keep considerable body of active forces in the vicinity of St. Petersburg, away from the decisive battle-point of the principal front.

Turkey was held to be a German instrument. Her intervention in a Russo-German war was probable. Her enmity, with the unreliability of the Caucasian populations, bound the two Caucasian corps to the Caucasian frontier. But it was hoped that the third Caucasian corps from the northern slope of the Caucasus would be transported to the principal theatre of war.

³⁷² Beaucaire, envoy in Copenhagen to Poincaré 12.VI 1912. EMATSH 7 N 1544

³⁷³ "Bulletin annuel 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1539

The active corps from the Black Sea coast, the expeditionary force, were also given tasks on the Austrian front. The ghost of the expedition was kept up with second-rate units.³⁷⁴

The Russian army in Transcaspia consisted of two army corps, 44 infantry battalions in all. In addition there was a native army of 30 000 men in the Bukhara protectorate. The local peoples endured docilely the Russian domination, but they could not be left without surveillance by at least 20 000 men. Consequently there remained about 60 000 men free for active operations. The French observer learned that the Transcaspian army was still dreaming of an offensive towards the Afghan and Indian borders, animated by the old animosity against England. But the local schemes were of no consequence in the years 1912—1914, because the entente of 1907 had eliminated the possibility of a Russo-English conflict in Central Asia.

Of the old dreams of Asian conquest only Persia still had some relevance. Since 1897 there had been a Russian-officered Cossack brigade in the Shah's country. It consisted of two regiments of four squadrons each, and one field battery and two horse batteries of four cannons each. The Russians had opposed the revolutionary movement in Persia which had since 1906 tried to replace the corrupt Shah by either modern democratic or ancient religious forms of government. The political process was too confused to be discussed here, but the Russians had succeeded in preventing any kind of order being established in northern Persia. The French major continues his report:

"The Russo-Japanese war was seen by the Persians as certain proof of the weakness of their once powerful neighbour. To the estimation, mixed with fear, which Russia had inspired up to that time, had been added a feeling of contemptuous pity; the powerful barbarians turned out to be feeble and poor barbarians... (The Persians) much preferred the English to the Russians who constantly hurt the polite people which the Persians are with their rude

³⁷⁴ "Emploi des troupes actives Russes en cas de guerre. Etude faite en Octobre—Novembre 1911". EMATSH 7 N 1538

manners. In addition, the Russians are poor while the English are rich".³⁷⁵

Another observer confirmed these impressions:

"General Ljakov's (commander of the Cossack brigade) role in the bombardment of the Mejlis had provoked indignation in Tabriz, and the role of the Russian consul exasperates the people. Already abhorred by the Turks, the Russians are making themselves abhorred in Persia. Their situation in Caucasia is already very difficult because of the local opposition to them, and now they are creating new difficulties for themselves in Persia".³⁷⁶

Central Asia was destined to remain on the outer confines of the approaching European conflict. These reports are of interest mainly as an illustration of Asian currents of thought, which had relevance only to a more distant future.

Earlier mentioned has been the Russian opinion that Finnish blood would be the first to be let. But (this same Guards general continued) the next blood to be let would be Austrian. One of the young captains commanded to Russia reported that the Habsburg monarchy was apparently the hereditary enemy, much more hated than Germany. Germany provoked antipathy and suspicion, but also admiration. France was regarded with an undeniable sympathy, and her financial support to Russia was one of the reasons for it. But a certain susceptibility also remained, since France had left Russia in the lurch in 1905. Little sympathy and little confidence was felt towards England, in spite of the recent entente. Political relations with Japan were good since the peace and subsequent treaties had been signed. But rancour remained because of defeat; no hate, but a desire to avenge the received affront. Romania enjoyed a little sympathy but not much confidence.

The officers on the German frontier admired the clean, ordered towns behind the border, "so different from their own". But they also knew the German pride, *Deutschland über alles*,

³⁷⁵ "La Russie et la Gde Bretagne en Asie Centrale", by H. de Bouillaue de Lacoste, Chef de Bataillon d'infanterie. EMATSH 7 N 1544

³⁷⁶ "M. le Capitaine Augincém. 19.X 1980". EMATSH 7 N 1544

heartily detested the Prussians and hoped for a war to beat the Germans and to attack Berlin.³⁷⁸

Of course, the good captain had not conducted a modern opinion poll. He had received his impressions from the officers' mess and staff officers, and thus his report reflects only a part of Russian opinion. However, Austria and Germany were generally regarded as Russia's principal enemies.

7.6. Planning the Russian Troop Concentration in 1912

The *Schlieffen Plan* was naturally made and kept secret. Its main lines were, however, well known and caused among the French the desperate need to ensure Russian pressure in the east to ease the German superiority on the French frontier.

It was known that the Germans had also studied the possibility of an attack eastwards in the beginning of the war. They calculated that they could start the offensive on the eighteenth day, and that by the thirty-fifth day they could have advanced to the line Kiev-Vilna. But the Russians were expected to retreat to the interior of their empire. German calculations showed that by the forty-fifth day no decision would have been reached, while in the meantime the French would be attacking in the west. Thus the mass of German troops would have to be transferred to the west. Bearing all this in mind the Germans came to the conclusion that they would have to abandon any plan of an initial offensive towards the east. The eastern border was to be fortified instead, and this would retard the Russian advance until the French army was crushed and the Germans then free to attack over the Vistula.³⁷⁸

This was the plan that the French and the Russians had to

³⁷⁸ "Rapport du Capitaine Lelong, détaché à la Brigade des Chasseurs du Suvalki, 7/20.VI 1914". EMATSH 7 N 1486

"Mai 1914. Analyse d'un document relatant l'étude faite au 1912 par le grand état-major allemand d'un projet d'opérations contre les russes en cas de guerre sur les deux fronts". EMATSH 7 N 1538

render void by combining their efforts.

In 1912 Russia disposed of 27 army corps in Europe and 28 reserve divisions, of which 20 were for field employment.³⁷⁹ Next year Joffre was told that there were 28 army corps available (the third Caucasian corps included) and 37 reserve divisions, of which 22 were free for field employment (the rest were necessary for keeping order in the interior and for garrisoning fortresses). The Russian infantry numbered 952 active battalions and 592 reserve battalions.³⁸⁰ The Baltic forces in the vicinity of capital consisted of two or three corps, about 128 battalions.³⁸¹

Thus there were 43 infantry divisions and 18.5 cavalry divisions available against the Germans and 39 infantry divisions with 20 cavalry divisions against the Austrians.³⁸² But that assignment of forces was going to vary according to the strength that the Germans directed against Russia. If they should come with more than 25 divisions, Russia was going to oppose them with 17 army corps, which left 9 corps against Austria.

The assignment Russian armies and army corps in the event of a strong German attack

against Germany 816 battalions

in the Vilna district IV army: XVIII, XVI, XXIV corps

I army: XX, III, II, I, IV

II army: VI, XV, XIX, XIII

Warsaw district III army: XXIII corps

V army: Grenadiers, V, XVII, XXV

against Austria 504 battalions

in southern Poland XIV corps

Volynia X, IX, XI, XXI

Podolia XII, VII, Cauc III (Variant: VIII)

Bessarabia VIII (Variant: reserve divisions only)

If the German threat was weaker, more corps could be

³⁷⁹ "Note sur l'action militaire de la Russie en Europe. Août 1912 — Mars 1913". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³⁸⁰ "Note remise au Gal Joffre, Juillet 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1535

³⁸¹ "Note sur les projets d'augmentation Russe, Juillet 1913" EMATSH 7 N 1535

³⁸² "Action militaire de la Russie en cas de conflit européen". EMATSH 7 N 1538

concentrated on the Austrian frontier and only thirteen corps left on the German frontier.

The assignment of Russian army corps in the event of weak German menace
Austrian frontier 632 battalions

in southern Poland	XIV, XIX, XXIII, XVII, XXV corps
Volynia	XI, IX, X, XXI
Podolia	XII, VII, Cauc. III, perhaps VIII
Bessarabia	VIII or reserve divisions

German frontier 688 battalions

IV army	XVIII, XVI, XXIV corps
I army	XX, III, II, I, IV
II army	VI, XV, XIII
III army	Grenadiers, V

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The Baltic army consisted of the Guards and the twenty-second army corps.

The actual details of the assignment of the corps between the armies and fronts varied in the successive troop concentration plans, but the plan of 1912 gives the general idea which remained constant.

An even more urgent problem than the assignment of forces between the German and Austrian fronts was the speed with which these forces could be concentrated for action.

Forces available according to the plan of 1912

	cavalry divisions	infantry divisions	cavalry reserve divisions	infantry reserve divisions
8th day	12.5	13.5		
12th	17.5	28.5		
15th	18.5	38.5		
20th	18.5	46.5	2	
23rd	19.5	48.5	2	5.5
26th	19.5	51.5	8.5	13
36th	20.5	54.5	18	20

384

The table above gives the figures for the year 1912. Next year the troops were reckoned in corps.

³⁸³ "Composition détaillée des armées 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1538

³⁸⁴ = 383

Forces available according to the plan of 1913

	I	II
6th day	VI, XIV, XV, XIX, XXIII, XI, XII, II, III	9 corps
8th	IX (part), IX, XX, VIII	
10th	IX (rest)	
12th	X, XXI, VII, Grenadiers, XIII, I, XVIII	
14th	V, XVII, XXV	11 corps
16th	XVI, XXIV, Cauc III	
19th	Sib I—V, Turkest I—II	
20th		21 corps
23rd		23 corps in all
not transported: Guards, XXII	385	386

There is a great different in the two tables from 1913. No essential improvement in the speed of mobilization and concentration was reported from 1912 to 1913. Therefore it seems that the dates in the left-hand column do not include the time (three to fifteen days) necessary for mobilization before the concentration transports could be started. This conclusion is supported by a report giving a third variation of the plan.

III

15th day: frontier zone corps mobilized, 8—9 corps facing Prussia
 20th day: 11 corps facing Prussia, 9 corps facing Austria, 4 corps a Brest prepared to join either group
 26th day: the greatest part of the reserve divisions detrained, only the most faraway active units remain in the rear

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The gravest problem remained constant:

"the relative slowness of the Russian troop concentration delays the moment when Russia will be able to take a resolute offensive."

The slowness was due to the extent of the empire, and the inefficiency of the Russian railways.³⁸⁵

Five or six days were necessary for the mobilization of the railways, i.e. to transform them from civilian to military use;

³⁸⁵ "La mobilisation russe. Juillet 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1538

³⁸⁶ "Emploi des troupes actives Russes en cas de guerre. Etude faite en octobre-novembre 1911, février 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1538

³⁸⁷ "Note sur l'action militaire de la Russie en Europe. Août 1912 — Mars 1913". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³⁸⁸ = ³⁸⁷

and even after that a quarter of their capacity had to be left for civilian transport needs. Thus a double line with a block system allowed 36 military trains a day (out of a total of 48), and a line without the block system allowed 18—30 trains a day, a single line 8—14 trains.³⁸⁹

There were eight lines from the interior to the frontier:

1. St. Petersburg-Riga-Kovno	1 track	14 trains
2. St. Petersburg-Warsaw	2 tracks	32
3. Bologoe-Sedlec-Warsaw	2 tracks	32
4. Moscow-Brest-Sedlec-Warsaw	2 tracks	32
5. Orel-Briansk-Gomel-Jabinka	1—2	
6. Poltava-Kovel	1	
7. Kursk-Kiev-Kovel	2	
8. Odessa-Proskurov	2	

(map 29)

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An army corps needed about 130 trains, and thus it occupied the line for several days. Because there were only the eight lines, one line had to carry several army corps. (graph 30). Unavoidably, this delayed their arrival at the frontier. The progress of troop concentrations can be seen in the attached sketch-maps (maps 31—34). In the first three maps (31—33) the number of the army corps and their strength in battalions is given on the various days of troop concentration. In the fourth map (34) the different armies and their strength in corps is given. The group of four corps at Brest is waiting for definite information of German strength before joining either the defence on the Prussian front or the attack towards Austria. The attack is to reach the line Przemysl-Lemberg and Thorn-Allenstein-Königsberg by the thirty-fifth day.

During the first weeks a defensive attitude was to be adopted in Poland (the twenty-third and fifteenth corps can be seen retreating eastwards from map 31 to map 33) combined with a cautious advance against the corner of East Prussia and Galicia to prevent the enemy from cutting the Polish salient, "a

³⁸⁹ "La mobilisation russe. Juillet 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1538

³⁹⁰ "Note sur l'action militaire de la Russie en Europe. Août 1912 — Mars 1913". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

"Note: Utilisation des chemins de fer Russes pour la concentration". EMATSH 7 N 1538

threat that dominates Russian planning, however improbable such an attempt seems to us (French)". The Russian general staff had promised to start action after the fifteenth day with the 8—9 corps then available against East Prussia, and on the twentieth day with 9 corps against Austria. The Warsaw concentration was too weak to allow the French any hope of Russian action on the western bank of the Vistula. After completing their troop concentration the Russians could start a more energetic offensive concentrically on the two fronts. The moment of starting this offensive was variously reported to be on the twenty-third, twenty-fifth, or thirtieth day.³⁹¹

The Bulgarian military attaché, who knew the Russians well, supposed that the Russians would have their troop concentrations completed on the 17th day, but his English colleague did not believe him:

"I don't think he has made sufficient allowance in his calculations for the stupidity and want of business capacity of the military and railway staffs, and for the fact that entrainment and detrainment are never practiced".³⁹²

There were five army corps in the Warsaw military district in peacetime, i.e. 80 000 rifles and 23 000 sabres. A surprise initial attack by these troops was looked at but found impossible. Only three divisions of infantry (out of ten) and three and a half cavalry divisions (out of seven and a half) were immediately available for operations, because the fortifications in Warsaw, Novogeorgevič, Zegrze, Lomža, Belostok, and Brest had to be manned, and also the Austrian border guarded. (With the reform of 1910 there were no longer any cadre formations of fortress troops, and thus the active troops had to garrison the fortifications until reserve troops arrived). A surprise attack with small troops on East Prussia was difficult because of the lakes and broken country. An attack in the direction of Berlin with all available troops would have led to an inevitable

³⁹¹ "Action militaire de la Russie en cas de conflit européen". EMATSH 7 N 1538

"Note au sujet du plan russe de 1912. 8.VII 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1538

³⁹² "Colonel Sirmanov's scheme", by Lt. Col Alfred Knox 10.XII 1913. EMATSH 7 N 1536

disaster, because if the frontier were stripped of all guards, the Germans would be left free to attack from East Prussia Belostok and the Austrians to attack Brest from Przemysl, thus cutting Poland and its army off from the rest of Russia.

Nor could the Russians think of leaving the Poles unguarded, because they were under the influence of Austrian propaganda. Leaving them alone would immediately provoke a revolt in Poland. Mobilizing the corps in Poland would also take its time, which made an immediate attack problematical. Or, if the corps were to be kept in constant wartime strength their number must be cut down, "which would diminish the value of the Alliance". Stationing them more eastward, in order to speed up their mobilization, would prolong the time necessary for the march to the frontier.

It seems that this study was initiated by the French, and the questions were answered by the Russians, with a negative result at every point. The conclusion was that Russia was not able to think of a sudden attack against Germany without exposing herself to the danger of a disaster.³⁹³

7.7. Efforts to Improve the Plan

This fact left matters as they were set out in the plans of the Russian general staff. This was not very satisfactory for the French. They remarked that the Russian armies facing Germany were not able to support each other because their frontier was of "immense length", 350 kilometres from Kovno via Grodno to Warsaw.

"Under these conditions the conduct of united offensive operations will certainly be most difficult. It is even permissible to wonder whether a German army, even inferior in strength but well concentrated in good time, could succeed in breaking the long cordon of Russian armies with a vigorous attack".

³⁹³ "Note au sujet des troupes russes de la circonscription de Varsovie 13.VI 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1538

Viewed from hindsight this apprehension seems prophetic. It is true that the French supposed that the attack would come from Thorn towards Warsaw, simultaneously with an Austrian attack from Przemysl on Brest. The French hoped that the Russians would concentrate their army more compactly in the region of Warsaw, from there to take the offensive against Allenstein, or against the left flank of the Austrians in the south, or towards Berlin, according to how the situation was shaping.

"But whichever plan is adopted, it is the main interest to reduce the duration of the concentration which is much too long, because the Russian offensive cannot begin before the twentythird day."

The problem had remained unchanged since the days of Boisdeffre:

"The military value of the alliance lies, above all, in the possibility of a simultaneous attack from the east and from the west. But this ideal is far from being realized. The Russians are in fact much slower than the French armies."

The solution lay always in improving the Russian railways:

"Couldn't the Russian staff make an effort analogous to that of the French general staff, which has won an advantage of one or two days over the Germans, thanks to ameliorations in their railway network."³⁹⁴

The French general staff consequently made a programme of improvements for the Russian railway network (map 35):

1. lines I and V to be doubled, a gain of four days
2. line III to be quadrupled from Sedlec to Warsaw
3. line V to be quadrupled from Jabinka to Brest

This was to allow the concentration of the mass of the Russian armies closer to Warsaw. With a view on an eventual offensive on the left bank, the lines from Warsaw to Thorn and Cracow were to be widened (from their European gauge of 1.44 m to the Russian gauge of 1.52 m). The Russians were also studying

³⁹⁴ "Note sur l'action militaire de la Russie en Europe. Août 1912 — Mars 1913". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

on their own initiative the possibility of constructing some additional lines.³⁹⁵

At their meeting in July 1912 Joffre and Žilinskiĭ also discussed in some detail the development of Russian railways with a view to accelerating Russian troops concentration. Žilinskiĭ explained that the railways owned by the state were being improved in proportion to the availability of funds. The state had no direct influence on the private railways. The lines from Warsaw to Cracow and Thorn had been purchased by the state only to enable them to be transformed from the European gauge to the Russian one. He admitted that it might be preferable to move the centre of gravity of his troop concentration southwards to Warsaw—Ivangorod in order to operate from there towards Allenstein or Posen, according to where the Germans were to be found.³⁹⁶

At the request of the French minister of war³⁹⁷ Poincaré took the notes of the French general staff with him on his visit to Russia in August 1912 and discussed them with Sazonov and the emperor. Sazonov promised his support for the French railway-demands in the council of ministers and with the emperor. Nicholas II found the question "interesting having discussed the question with M. Delcassé earlier". He promised not to lose the question from sight.³⁹⁸

The Dual Alliance, especially in its military aspect, appeared to be strengthened by the appointment of Delcassé to the embassy in St. Petersburg. "It cannot be said that his appointment has been greeted with satisfaction here" a French envoy reported from Germany,³⁹⁹ and in the entente camp "it is an event of first importance and has produced a most favourable impression."⁴⁰⁰

Delcassé kept reminding the Russians of the railway programme and reported that "the Russians are working

³⁹⁵ "Améliorations possible du réseau ferrée de la Russie". (in "Note sur l'action . . ." = ³⁹⁴)

³⁹⁶ Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 13 juillet 1912 . . ." § 3 AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³⁹⁷ War ministry to MAE 30.VII 1912. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³⁹⁸ "Voyage de M. Poincaré en Russie, Août 1912. Entretien avec M. Sazonoff, . . . Entretien avec l'Empereur". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 41

³⁹⁹ Envoy in Stuttgart to MAE 21.II 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

⁴⁰⁰ Envoy in Belgrade to MAE 25.II 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

diligently": they had even proposed the additional lines from Rjazan via Tula-Rovno-Bielsk to Warsaw. The emperor and the council of ministers approved the railway programme of the chiefs of staff in March 1913 and the additional lines in the summer of 1913. Delcassé acknowledged the good will of the Russians, but added that the French were always able to add their "useful word" in case of necessity, when authorizing the annual loan emissions on the Paris exchange.⁴⁰¹ By the summer of 1913 General Joffre, too, was well satisfied with the progress of the Russian railway programme sketched at the previous meeting.⁴⁰²

Delcassé's reference to the eventual "useful word" relates to the principal reason for the defect of the Russian railway system — lack of money. France had supplied funds for financing Russia's economy since the days of Alexander III.⁴⁰³ Now a loan was arranged with special reference to the railway programme and to the strengthening of the Russian army. Russia was to obtain annually 400—500 million roubles to reactivate railway construction everywhere in the empire, on condition that the strategic railways mentioned in the protocol of 1912 were started immediately. Kokovtsov, being the minister of finance as well as prime minister, seemed to accept the condition "with pleasure" and was even gratified: he explained that there was no other source for the development of the Russian railways, which was of prime importance for the Russian economy then in full growth. The French financial agent reported that "there is something really formidable preparing in Russia".⁴⁰⁴

Joffre and Žilinskiĭ met again in August 1913 and read through and approved the military convention and the various explanations and additions which had been made to it during

⁴⁰¹ Delcassé to MAE 1.VIII 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42, DDF VIII/3 n:o 513

Delcassé to MAE 2.VIII 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42, DDF VIII/3 n:o 521

⁴⁰² Delcassé to MAE 12.VIII 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

⁴⁰³ The financial history of the Dual Alliance cannot be dealt with here. There are several studies of it, e.g. B.V. Anan'ič, *Rossija i meždunarodnyĭ kapital 1897—1914*. Leningrad 1970, or Raymond Poidevin, *Finances et relations internationales 1887—1914*. Paris 1970

⁴⁰⁴ "Note resumé á MAE" 7.VII 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

the meetings of the general staff chiefs. The principle was confirmed that a simultaneous and immediate mobilization by the allies was to follow any act of war by Germany. The new German plan of 1913 reduced the time the Allies had for their mobilization and consequently allowed Germany more time to deal with France without a Russian threat from the east.

At previous meetings Žilinskiĭ had promised an offensive starting from the fifteenth day. Now he made a definite promise to this effect.

The two generals were of a single mind that it was of prime necessity to reach a decisive success as soon as possible. A defeat of the French armies at the beginning would allow the Germans to transfer part of their armies to the east and defeat Russia in her turn. On the other hand a French success would facilitate the Russian operations, because then the transfer of the German armies to the east would be impossible. Therefore it was of importance, declared Joffre, for the French to have numerical superiority over the German forces in the west. This would be possible if the Germans were compelled to guard their eastern frontier with great force. It would be best of all if the Russian troops in the Warsaw military district would already constitute a threat to the Germans in peacetime. Žilinskiĭ answered that a new army corps was being organized in Warsaw in the new Russian programme.

Joffre again remarked that it was useless to leave a considerable part of the Russian forces against Sweden and Turkey; he

”estimated that the defeat of Germany would facilitate the subsequent Russian operations against other enemy powers. The German defeat had to be pursued at the very beginning of the operations at any price”.

But in this respect Joffre could not make the Russians change their plans.

Joffre then explained that the French troop concentrations would be completed on the tenth day, and that on the following day he was going to start the French offensive with nearly the whole of the French army, one hundred thousand men more than had been promised in the convention. Žilinskiĭ answered that he would have 800 000 men concentrated on the German

border by the fifteenth day and would start their advance immediately after that day. The thrust was to be in the direction of the East Prussia or Posen and Berlin according to where the Germans were concentrated.⁴⁰⁵

Nicholas II gave his word to Joffre:

"You can have an absolute confidence in me . . . You can count on me and my army".⁴⁰⁶

Žilinskiĭ came in for criticism later for his "rash" promise, when the promised offensive ended in disaster. But it can be seen from the preceding account that his promise was not rash; it was based on his plans for troop concentration and mobilization. On the fifteenth day at least 8—9 army corps were to be concentrated on the Prussian frontier (p. 187). The disastrous result in 1914 was due to utter incompetence in the execution of the plan; but even so the offensive was dangerous to the Germans and had its importance in the outcome of the battle of the Marne. The agreement of Joffre and Žilinskiĭ simply made military sense, once the theory of an unavoidable war and of a single decisive battle at the very beginning of hostilities was accepted. Of course, neither Joffre's nor Žilinskiĭ's plans were relevant to a long war of attrition, which no responsible military leader expected.

The generals also reviewed the railway programme (map 36) and found that the line Orel—Warsaw had been double-tracked, Jabinka—Brest four-tracked. Instead of further improving the Sedlec—Bologoe line the Russians had planned a new line from Rjazan and Tula to Warsaw. New desiderata were then listed:

1. doubling the line Penza—Smolensk
2. doubling the line Poltava—Kiev—Kovel
3. doubling the line Rovno—Sarny—Luninec—Baranoviĉi

The importance of having the Russian gauge on the lines to the west of the Vistula was again emphasized, as well as having crossings over the river. The generals also now stressed that it

⁴⁰⁵ "Procès-verbal des entretiens du mois Août 1913 entre les chefs d'état-major des armées française et russe". AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42. DDF VIII/3 n:o 79

⁴⁰⁶ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 21.VIII 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

was vital to have more rolling stock, especially more powerful locomotives.⁴⁰⁷

The new lines were included in the preconditions of the loan which Russia was negotiating with French financial experts. Kokovtsov was a bit "surprised", i.e. reluctant, because earlier the generals had mentioned only some short lines, and now they demanded the construction in a few years of 5330 kilometres of new lines. An equal length of commercial lines was conceded or projected, in all about 11 000 kilometres absorbing about 2 500 000 000 francs during the following five or six years. But it was agreed that Russia was to receive 500 million francs annually from France, on condition that the strategic lines were to be built in four years. The discussions took the rest of the year (1913), while the Russians tried to avoid too definite promises and Kokovtsov also tried to substitute more economically useful lines for some of the military line, but these details are not very relevant here.⁴⁰⁸

Captain Wehrlin calculated that this programme was going to give Russia seven lines to the frontier between Kovel and Belostok, of which four lines would continue over the Vistula; and three or four continuous lines from the Volga and Caucasia to the western frontier.⁴⁰⁹ Some of the commercial lines were also useful from the military point of view.

7.8. The Grand Programme for Increasing the Russian Army

Another desideratum of the French was an increase in the strength of the Russian army. There was no quarrel with the Russian general staff in this respect. The Russian government

⁴⁰⁷ = 405

⁴⁰⁸ Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 27.IX 1913, 28.X 1913, 31.XII 1913, 11.I 1914. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

⁴⁰⁹ Wehrlin to war minister 20.XII 1913/2.I 1914. EMATSH 7 N 1540, AMAE C.P. Russie N.S. 42

and the Duma were also well disposed towards the demands of defence, even if Kokovtsov quarrelled with Suhomlinov about the haphazard use of the appropriations. A grand programme was compiled for increasing the army in the years 1913—1917. The Duma adopted a programme for increasing the annual number of conscripts from 450 000 (1913) to 585 000 in 1917. This would raise the effectives of the peace-time army from 1 280 000 to 1 700 000 in 1917.⁴¹⁰

The increase in numbers implied new formations, too. The number of army corps was to be increased from 27 to 33 (in Europe). The first in order was the twenty-sixth corps in Warsaw, for which horses, guns, and material was already being collected by the time of Joffre's visit in August 1913.⁴¹¹ The twenty-seventh for Kiev was due sometime in 1915 or 1916. Twenty-six new cavalry regiments were planned — 2 in 1914, 6 in 1915, 9 in 1916 and 9 in 1917.⁴¹² The artillery of each corps was to be reorganized. Instead of twelve batteries of eight cannons each there were to be eighteen six-gun batteries. The result would be an increase from 96 to 108 cannons for each corps. Heavy artillery was to be increased, too. New detachments were to be established to man the Polish fortresses. Turkestan was to receive six new battalions, and Vladivostok a new division of 16 battalions.⁴¹³

The outbreak of war in August 1914 prevented Russia from realizing this vast programme. Of course, one of the reasons for the fact that Germany was not absolutely resolute in defending peace during the July crisis was the knowledge that Russia would be sure to gain this additional strength in the future, and that it was in 1914 if ever that Germany had a chance of winning a war on two fronts.

Of the great programme only one army corps in Warsaw and one rifle brigade for the twenty-second corps in Finland was

⁴¹⁰ "Augmentation de l'effectif de l'armée russe". Ambassador in St. Petersburg to MAE 6.VI 1914. EMATSH 7 N 1480

⁴¹¹ Delcassé to MAE 12.VIII 1913. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

⁴¹² "Note sur les projets de renforcement de l'Armée Russe". Laguiche to war minister 24.III 1914. EMATSH 7 N 1478

⁴¹³ "Note sur les projets d'augmentation de l'Armée Russe, Juillet 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1535

"Note sur les projets d'augmentation de l'armée russe, 24.III 1914". EMATSH 7 N 1535

established by the time war broke out.⁴¹⁴

The Guards and the first and/or the eighteenth corps had been earmarked for guarding the capital and the Baltic coast during the first days of the war. The new brigade in Finland freed one division in the St. Petersburg district, and consequently it was possible to transport one of the army corps from there to the frontier.⁴¹⁵ This information of the French military attaché's was not entirely free from contradiction: the Guards corps was not seen among the corps marching to the front (maps 31—33), but both the first and the eighteenth were there. Perhaps the earlier information was still valid: these corps were to march to the front, but only after it was seen that the menace of a German or a Swedish landing was not materializing. In fact also the twenty-second corps was transferred to the western front when the Finns did not revolt and Sweden did not attempt a landing in Finland in August 1914.

A new plan of troop concentration was being prepared for the autumn of 1914, but the war broke out before it came into operation. Thus the Russian army began fighting with the strength and according to the plans which the French knew from the years 1912 and 1913.⁴¹⁶

The strength of the Russian army in Europe on the eve of the great war

infantry	55 divisions	
	9 brigades	592 battalions
reserve	37 divisions	592 battalions
cavalry	20 divisions	
	4 brigades	
	3 regiments	560 squadrons
reserve	15 divisions	524 squadrons or sotnias
artillery		361 field batteries
		56 mortar batteries
		42 horse batteries
		10 heavy batteries
reserve		198 field batteries
		36 mortar batteries
		17 horse batteries

⁴¹⁴ Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voïny* p. 93

⁴¹⁵ "Création de la 4ème Bde de tirailleurs de Finlande". Laguiche to war minister 26.IV/9.V 1915. EMATSH 7 N 1478 "Modification dans la repartition des troupes". Laguiche to war minister 23.V/5.VI 1913. EMATSH 7 N 1478

These troops were organized in the Guards corps, the Grenadier corps, and the twenty-five army corps plus one corps forming in Warsaw. In addition there were three corps in Caucasia, two corps in Turkestan, and five corps in Siberia. As always, each army corps consisted of two infantry divisions, one or two calvary divisions, two artillery brigades and one mortar group, one sapper battalion, and some of the corps one rifle brigade. The twenty-second corps in Finland consisted of four rifle brigades.⁴¹⁷

Numerically and materially the army was tolerably prepared for the first battle, equal to the Austrian army and not totally hopeless in comparison with the Germans. No thought had been given to the possibility of a long war. The offensive to East Prussia was partly improvised because Suhomlinov had razed magazines and fortifications in Poland in preparation for his plan of 1910, which was subsequently annulled.⁴¹⁸

Some slight personal defects in the higher echelons of the army were noticed, e.g. "Suhomlinov does not think about anything else but the skirts of his wife"⁴¹⁹ or "Januškevič has been appointed chief of staff, which makes a bad impression because he has little experience of commanding troops".⁴²⁰ Kokovtsov was replaced by the ancient Goremykin by the end of January 1914, and there were rumours of Sazonov's dismissal.⁴²¹ With the wisdom of hindsight it is possible to understand that these were symptoms of grave defects, of the disease that defeated the Russian army and killed the Russian empire after a few years of battle. But the further story lies outside the framework of this exposition.

However, it may be added for comparison that at the moment of Russia's maximum effort in 1917 she had mobilized 15 or 16 million men. After the casualties — a couple of million killed, more than one million crippled, an unknown number of wounded, a couple of million prisoners of war, a number of deserters; and a few million men in depots and supply service

⁴¹⁶ Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny* p. 320

⁴¹⁷ "Notice complète sur l'armée Russe" s.d. EMATSH 7 N 1536

⁴¹⁸ Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny* p. 300

⁴¹⁹ Laguiche to General Dupont 22.VI/5.VII 1913. EMATSH 7 N 1478

⁴²⁰ Laguiche to General Dupont 29.III/11.IV 1914. EMATSH 7 N 1478

⁴²¹ Laguiche to General Dupont 30.I/12.II 1914. EMATSH 7 N 1478

— enough combatants remained to form 202 infantry divisions and 50 calvary divisions, united in twelve armies.⁴²²

⁴²² "Renseignements demandés pour l'établissement d'un tableau comparatif de l'effort de mobilisation et des pertes des grandes puissances belligérants 28.I 1919". EMATSH 7 N 1538

8. Conclusion

The French military attachés were able to acquire much information on the Russian army. The picture drawn on the basis of their material is complete enough in military and political questions, even though they were unable to perceive social and economic aspects. The widest and most detailed view was given by Moulin. Then, during Matton's time, the Russian wish to hid their intention of ignoring the French alliance obscured the picture. With the revival of the alliance the quality of information also improved.

The French aim in the military alliance remained constant. Germany was to be compelled to fight simultaneously on two fronts to save France from defeat by superior German forces, and eventually to render possible the reconquest of her lost provinces and the retrieval of her leading political role in Europe. England was taken into account as a potential enemy in 1898 but disappeared from that role in 1904.

In the beginning the Russian general staff hoped that the Dual Alliance would relieve them of the German menace and leave them free for the fight with Austria, the principal rival in the Oriental question. But they never dared to leave the German frontier without strong defences, and little by little Germany took over the role of principal enemy. This was perhaps partially due to French insistence, but mainly to the incessant growth of German might and ambition. A reversal of alliances seemed possible by the turn of the century because of the Russian adventure in the Far East and the possibility of the dissolution of the Habsburg empire. Later Suhomlinov planned to replace troop concentrations in Poland with a defensive

position in White Russia. But already in 1909 Germany was seen to be supporting Austrian schemes in the Balkans, and by 1914 Germany's own plans in Turkey and Constantinople were definitely revealed. Delcassé said to Nicholas II that the road via Vienna to Constantinople was, appearances notwithstanding, not a straight one. "Yes, I know" the emperor said, "it goes through Berlin".⁴²³

Germany was not to be allowed to fight and conquer each in turn France and Russia. By 1913 the French and Russian general staffs had agreed on the principle of a simultaneous attack from the west and from the east against Germany.

To make possible the realization of this plan France financed Russian armaments and railway programmes, and the French generals were never reticent in expressing their wishes. But the Russian army was not dominated by French generals. Military logic led the French and the Russian generals to uniform conclusions once the premise of the one decisive battle in the beginning of the expected war was adopted. Sometimes the generals schemed together against the Russian civilian government, especially the minister of finance.

Of course, the opposition of the minister of finance was not due to any arbitrary obstructionism. It reflected the fact of Russian underdevelopment, the fact that Russia was not financially or materially able to arm all her potential manpower or to construct communications comparable to those of western Europe.

From the reports of the French military attaché a picture emerges of an unrelenting endeavour to develop the Russian armed forces. But the historian has the advantage of seeing also the formidable structural impediments to this. He can observe and put together the innumerable comments on the waste of the soldiers' time, the officers' lack of energy and interest, of the incompetence of the decrepit generals, of the lack of system and order, of the corruption of the administration. These "expressions of the Slav soul" can be taken as symptoms of the rottenness of the social and political system of the Old Russia.

The system nearly collapsed in 1905. For years the armed

⁴²³ Delcassé to M AE 29.I 1914. AMAE, C.P. Russie N.S. 42

forces were occupied in restoring order, neglecting their professional tasks. Revolutionary agitation was reported in some army and naval units, too, even afterwards. These facts were, however, soon forgotten or ignored. The inability to see defects in itself and to reform itself must have been one of the mortal defects of the Tsarist system.

Another structural problem in the Russian empire was the national question. In the era of nationalism there emerged two contradictory currents. The Russians attempted to build a unified national state — the apparent strength of such a system was demonstrated in the bitterly admired neighbour Germany. But simultaneously the various peoples of the empire were infected by a national consciousness of their own; only the backward tribes of inner and eastern Russia continued to be assimilated. The Poles, a historical nation, had not been satisfied with a mere autonomy; twice, in 1830 and 1863, they had violently shown their feelings. The subsequent policy of incompetent integration had made them completely irreconcilable. A policy of brutal segregation had made the Jewish population equally irreconcilable. In the Baltic provinces the barons, Russia's most conscientious administrators, were suspected of German sympathies. Their self-government was whittled down with the support of the local Letts and Estonians. But these peoples then started developing their own instead of a Russian nationality. In Finland there had been a Swedo-Finnish quarrel, but it subsided and was replaced by opposition to the Russian policy of uniting the Grand Duchy to the central parts of the empire. In Caucasia the various small tribes were hardly pacified, and the Armenians did not know whether the Russians or the Turks ought to be hated more. The Muslim population in Caucasia as well as in Turkmenistan could be suspected of anticolonial pan-Islamic feelings.

Thus Finns and some Caucasians had to be relieved of all military service. Polish and Jewish recruits caused problems in planning the mobilization. Several army corps had to be kept out of the initial principal battle to watch the potential rebels. The result of all Russian efforts to unite these peoples by force was the separation of the border regions in 1917 when there was no more force left. The Bolsheviks had quite a task to reconquer the empire. Of course, allowing local nationalism

free rein might have resulted in separatism, too.

The Russian commanders and the general staff were not satisfied simply to serve in their country's defence; they sketched far-reaching programmes of conquest. Their imperialist dreams reached out towards Galicia and the Turkish Straits and further on over all the Balkans and to a naval position on the Mediterranean. In Persia they tried to build a dominating position and to reach the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The pressure on the Indian and Afghan borders seems to have been mainly a means of blackmailing England to concessions in the Near East, but some ideas of conquest were cherished among the army chiefs in Transcaspia. The Far East schemes were fostered mainly by the court and naval circles, but were not totally alien to the general staff, either. The plan of a landing on the Bosphorus, accepted by all in the 1880's, was still there in the naval plans of 1912 but had disappeared from the army planning. The core of the expeditionary force was re-allocated to tasks on the main battle front, and only the Caucasian district continued preparations for a battle with the Turks.

These plans were reflections of dreams that existed even outside the military, among the "patriotic" circles of the civil population. The generals were not able to make their plans part of Russia's official foreign policy; neither the government nor the foreign office were tools of the military or the chauvinists. The professional diplomatists were able to perceive that all attempts to realize such dreams would be rendered suicidal by the reactions of other powers. But the suicide was often very close, even before the catastrophe of 1914.

The attitude of the military towards the neighbouring countries was not always in line with the current reality. They regarded Japan as a dangerous enemy, or they took Italy's membership in the Triple Alliance at face value long after the diplomatic ententes had removed all danger of a Japanese attack or any chance of an Italian corps fighting against Russia or France. The generals had a tendency to regard nations as either enemies or friends, without nuances. The admirals did not understand that a naval demonstration on the Swedish coast could make an enemy out of a pro-German neutral; it is well known that Admiral v. Essen was at the last moment prevented from provoking the Swedes in this way in August 1914.

The war plans were made for the eventuality of a war against Austria and Germany. Fortifications were constructed, railways were built, manoeuvres held according to these plans. All this must have had some importance in the development of the general attitude towards these neighbours, working against any real attempt to reach an entente with them. And the neighbouring states knew of the Franco-Russian preparations and of the military-patriotic schemes of conquest. They would not have been able to trust any proposal for an entente if one had been made. A war was thought to unavoidable, and preparations for it made it inevitable.

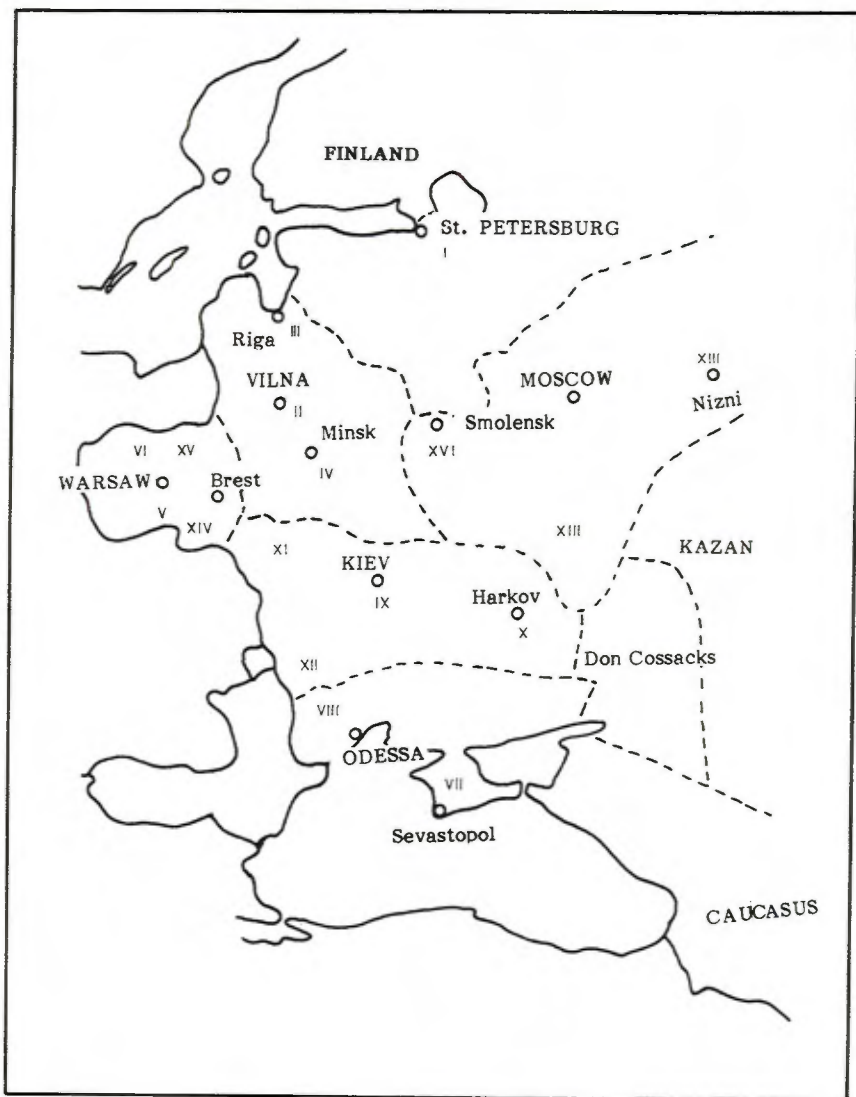
The theory built around the idea of a decisive battle to be fought and won at the first moment of the war gave enormous significance to speed in mobilization. The obsession with the *n*-th day emerges constantly from the preceding account. It explains the impatience with which the military watched the attempt at conciliation during the July crisis of 1914⁴²⁴ and why they wrenched the decision from the diplomatists. In this aspect there is a complete symmetry between the Franco-Russian and the Austro-German camps. It is not possible to judge one or the other party guilty or not guilty of the war, whatever the sequence of their decisions or despatches might be. The European political and military culture was guilty of the great war.

Appointing individual guilt is, of course, a political or propagandist question, not a historical problem. If we were concerned with the *Kriegsschuldfrage*, we could make much of the aggressive plans of the Russian general staff or of Matton's or Moulin's letters. Perhaps it is significant that the editors of the French collection of diplomatic documents have not published Matton's letters, for instance. But even so no sensible historian could regard the French or the Russians of being innocent of involvement in the lead-up to the great war, any more than other nations. These officers would have felt hurt if they had been accused of a lack of warlike disposition. In the nineteenth century war was a romantic test of manly virtue, for

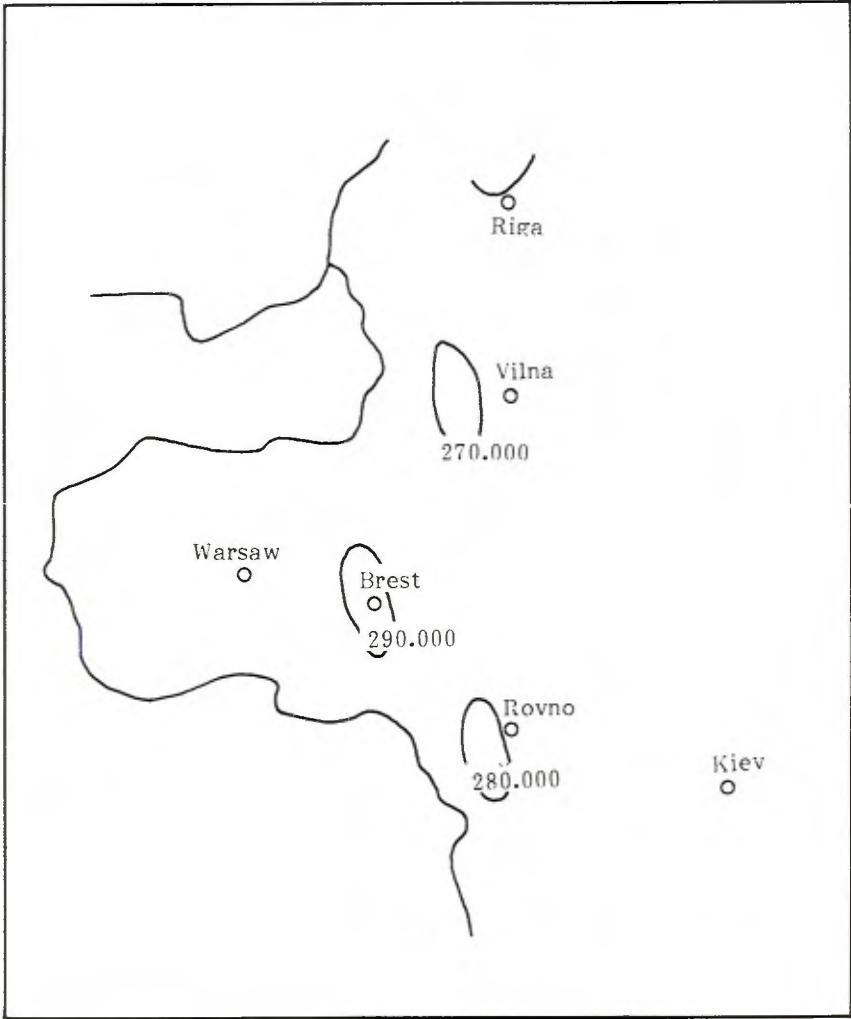
⁴²⁴ L.C.F. Turner, The Russian Mobilisation in 1914, in *The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880—1914*, ed. by M. Kennedy, London 1979, p. 252—266, discusses the last phase of the Russian military planning in detail.

seriously-thinking people; only some of the idealistically-minded saw it as an abominable crime against humanity. It was legitimate to defend national honour, power, influence, interest. If the devious schemes of the enemy made a war inevitable, it was one's right and duty even to start that war if conditions proved favourable for victory, conquest, weakening the enemy, or other positive result.

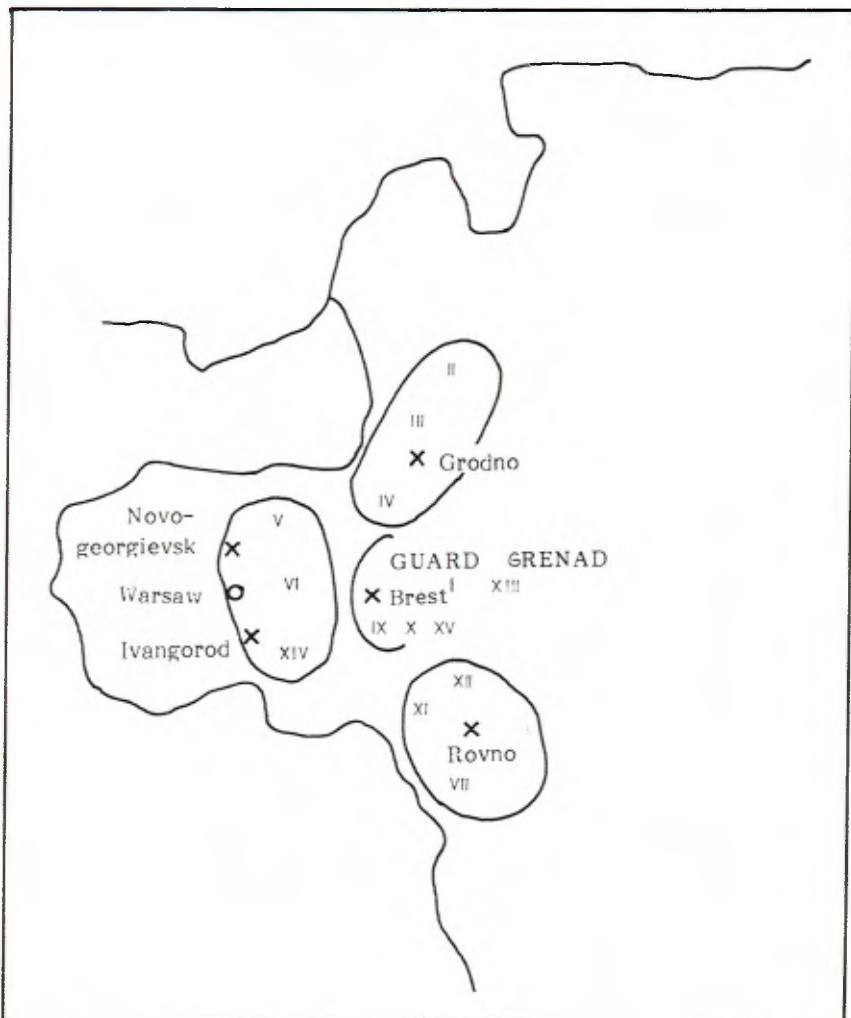
Nobody prepared for a world war. The preparations were for a short war, for the one battle, which would disentagle the problems that had worried the diplomats for decades. It is another story how this cheerful dash turned into the nightmare of 1914—1918 and/or 1914—1945.



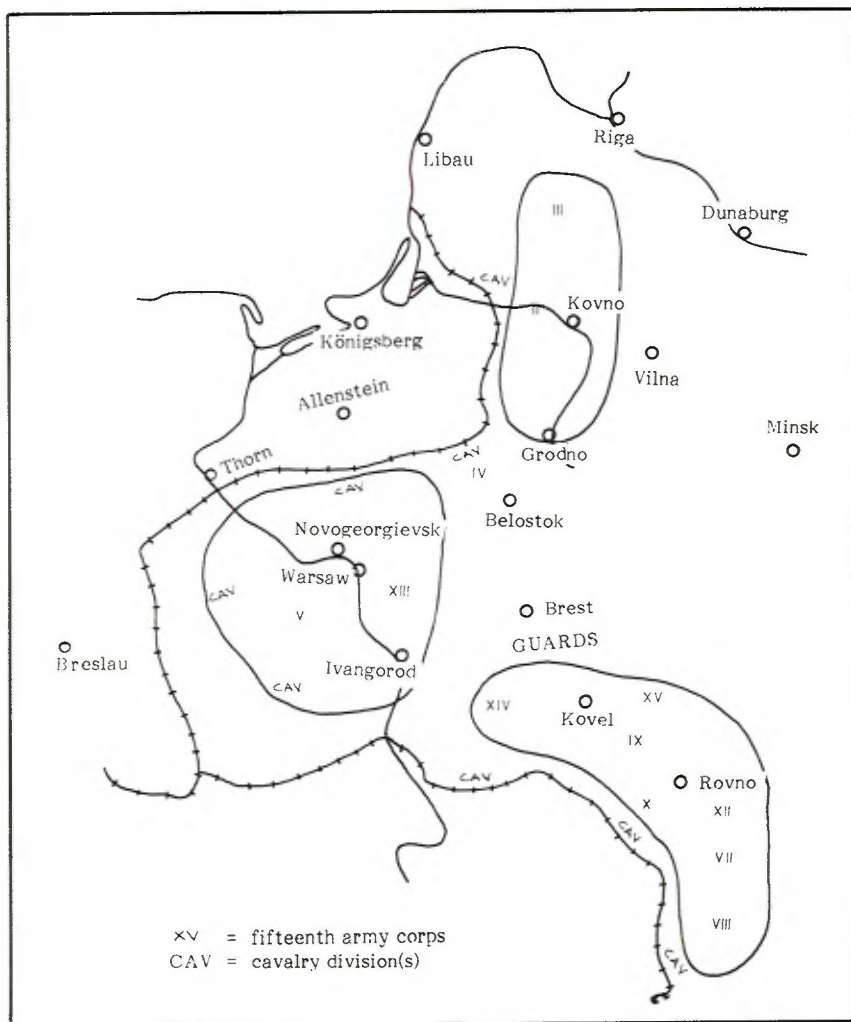
Map 1. Military districts and peacetime deployment of army corps, 1889—1892
 (Mission en Russie du Cm. Matton, "Mémoire sur la Russie" 29. XII 1892. EMATSH 7 N 1484)



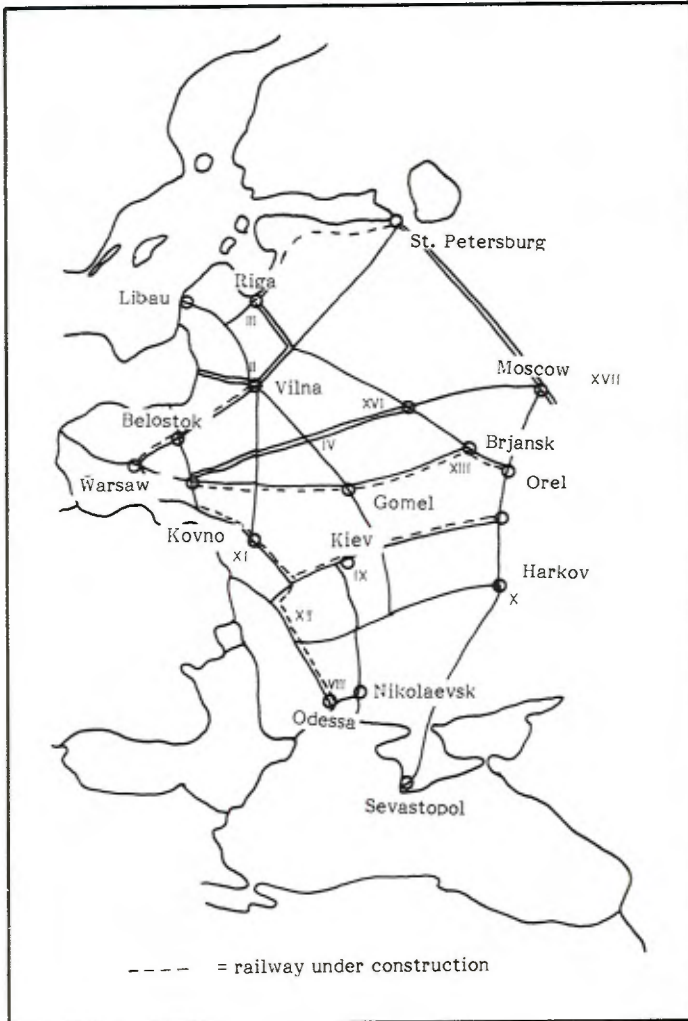
Map 2. Planned troop concentrations, 1882
 ("Historique de la concentration russe de 1882 à 1902,
 Croquis I, Concentration russe 1882". EMATSH 7 N 1509)



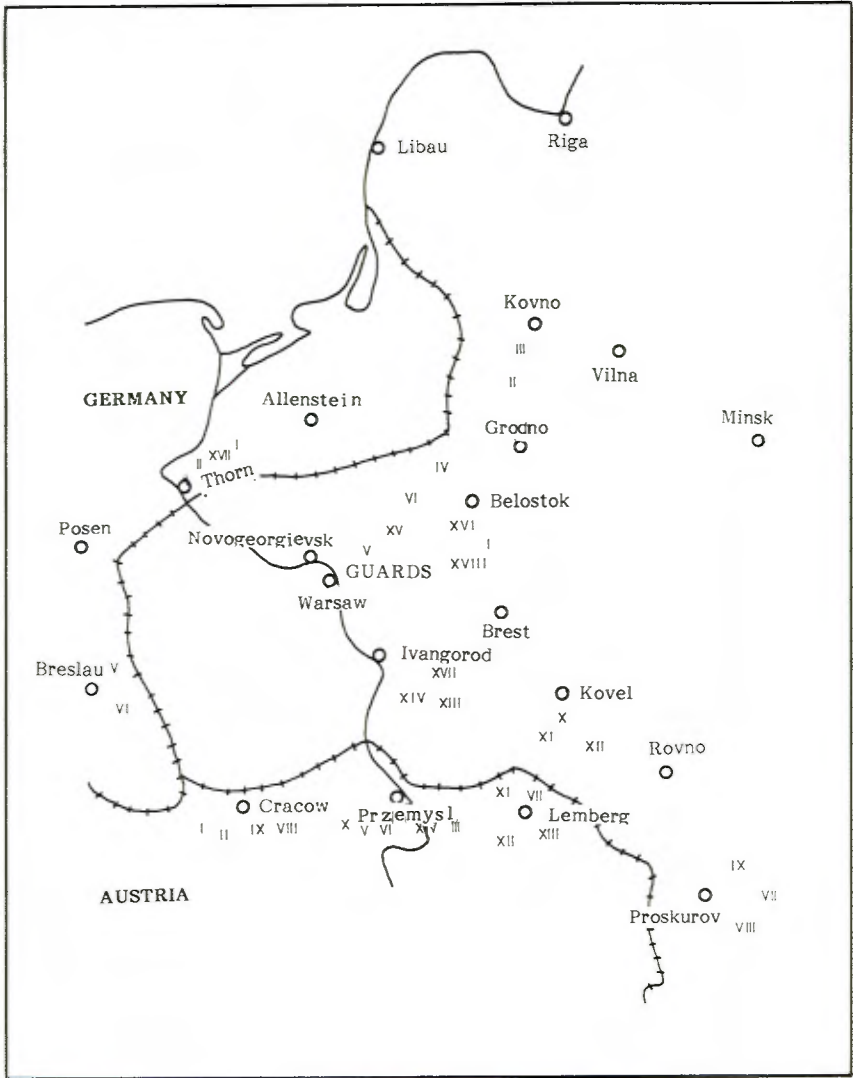
Map 3. Planned troop concentrations, 1884
 ("Historique de la concentration russe de 1882 à 1902,
 Croquis II, Schéma de la concentration russe 1884".
 EMATSH 7 N 1509")



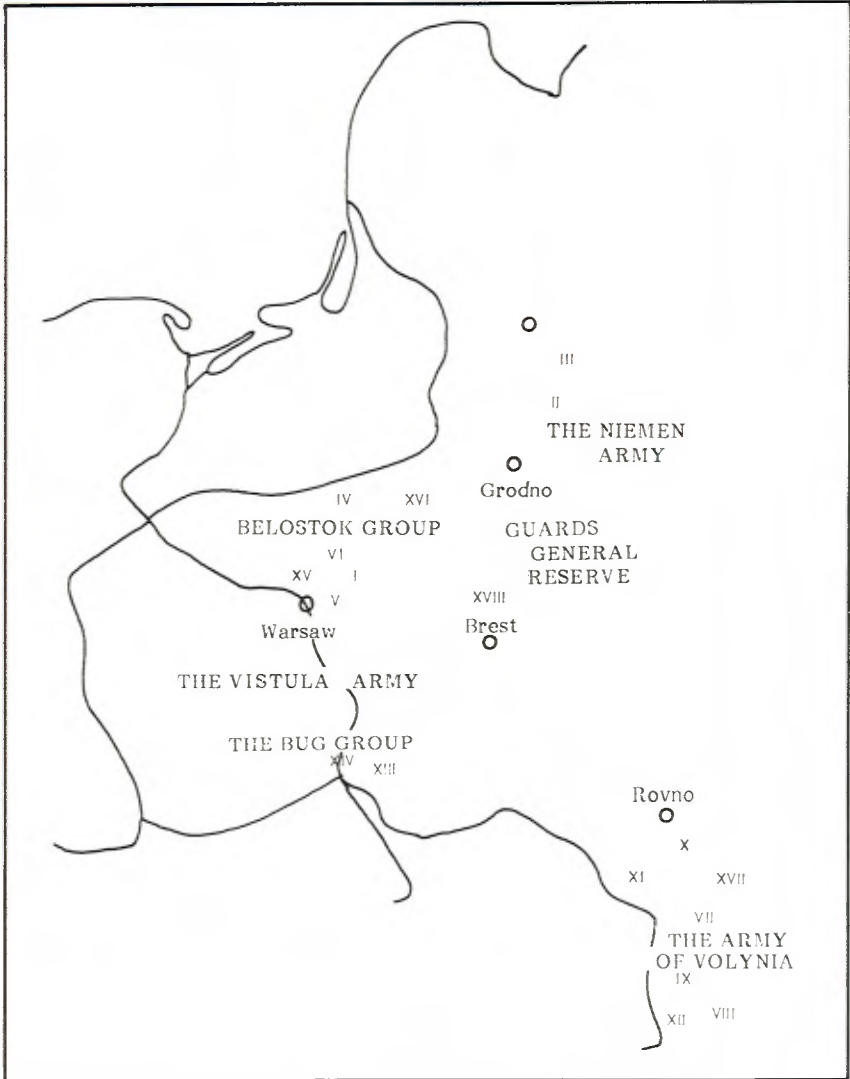
Map 4. Planned troop concentrations, 1880, according to Zaiončkovskii
(Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny*, Karta n:o 3)



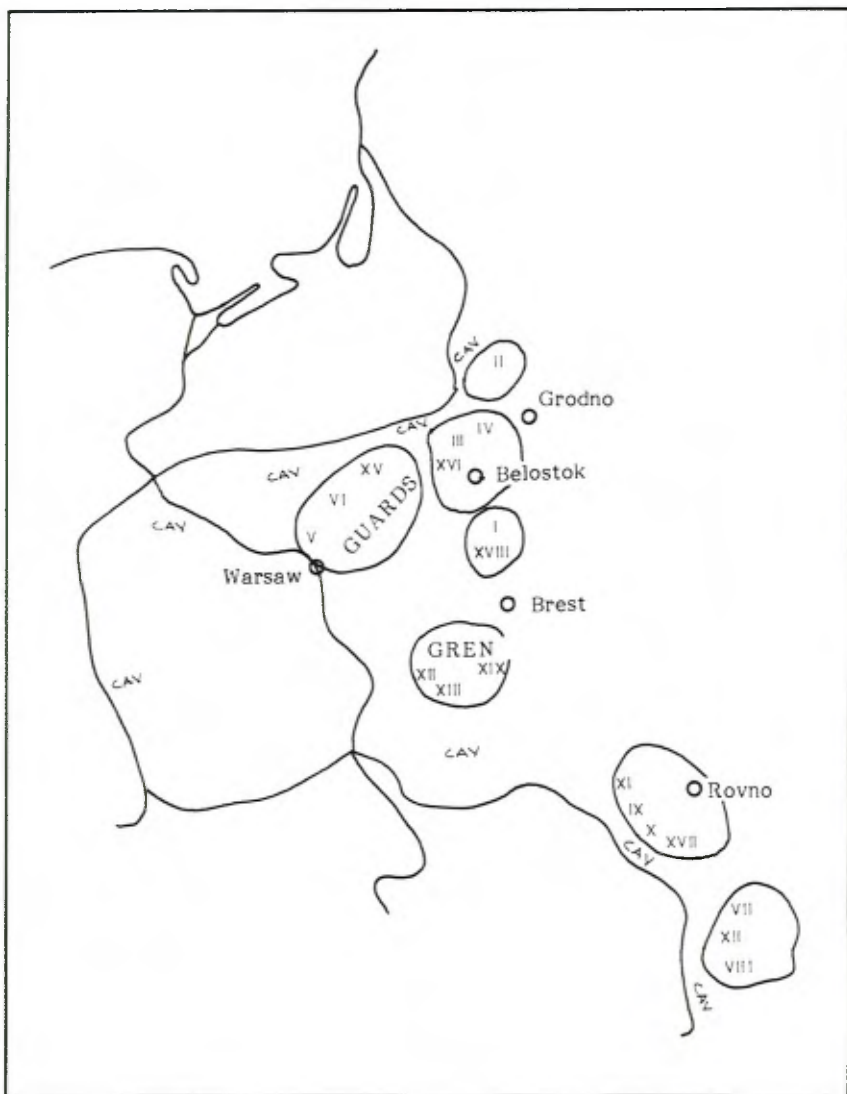
Map 5. Strategic railways in the eighties and the army corps to be transported to the west
 ("Historique de la concentration russe de 1882 à 1902", EMATSH 7 N 1509; and several reports by the French military attaché, EMATSH 7 N 1471—1472)



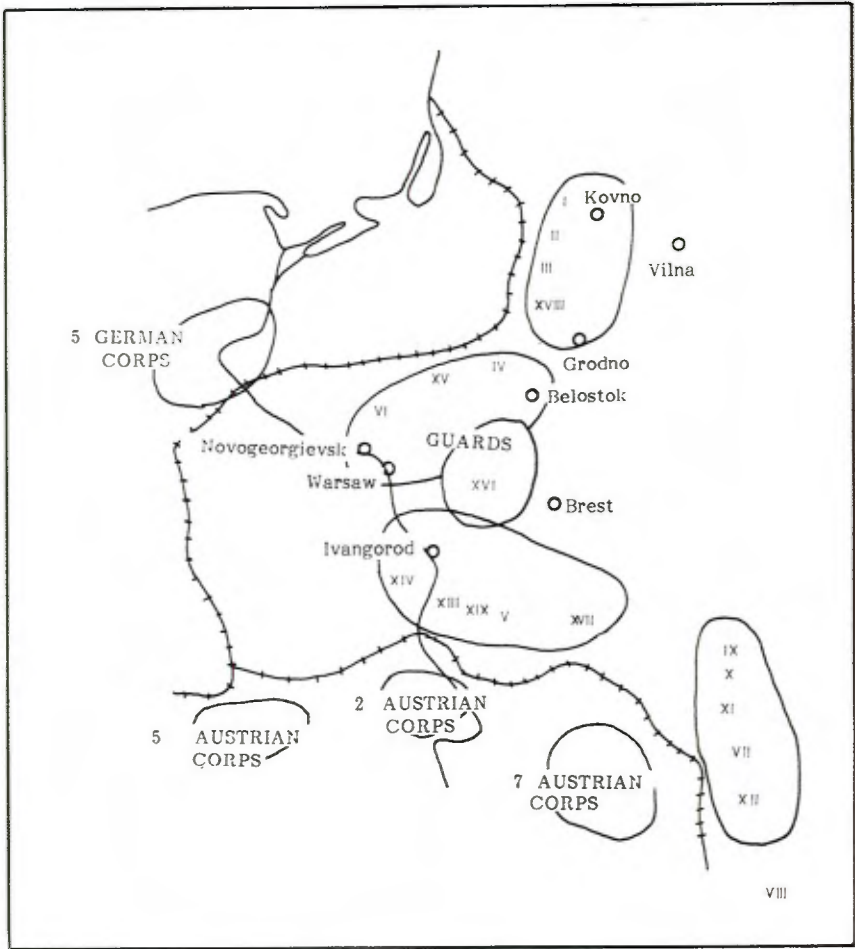
Map 6. Russian and supposed enemy troop concentrations, 1892
 ("Carte remise au Gal du Boisdeffre le 11. avril 1892".
 Moulin to war minister 7.VI 1892. EMATSH 7 N 1508)



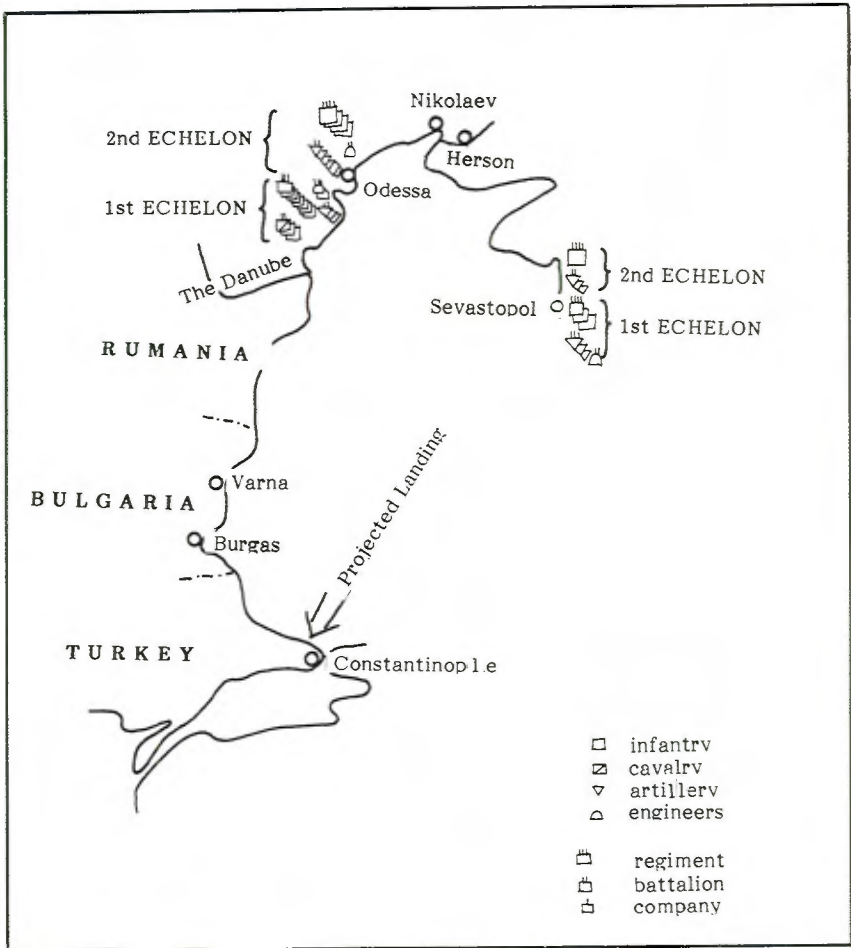
Map 7. Planned troop concentrations, 1890, according to Zaiončkovskii.
 (Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny*, Karta n:o 6)



Map 9. Planned troop concentrations, 1896
 (Moulin to war minister 14.II 1896. EMATSH 7 N 1474)



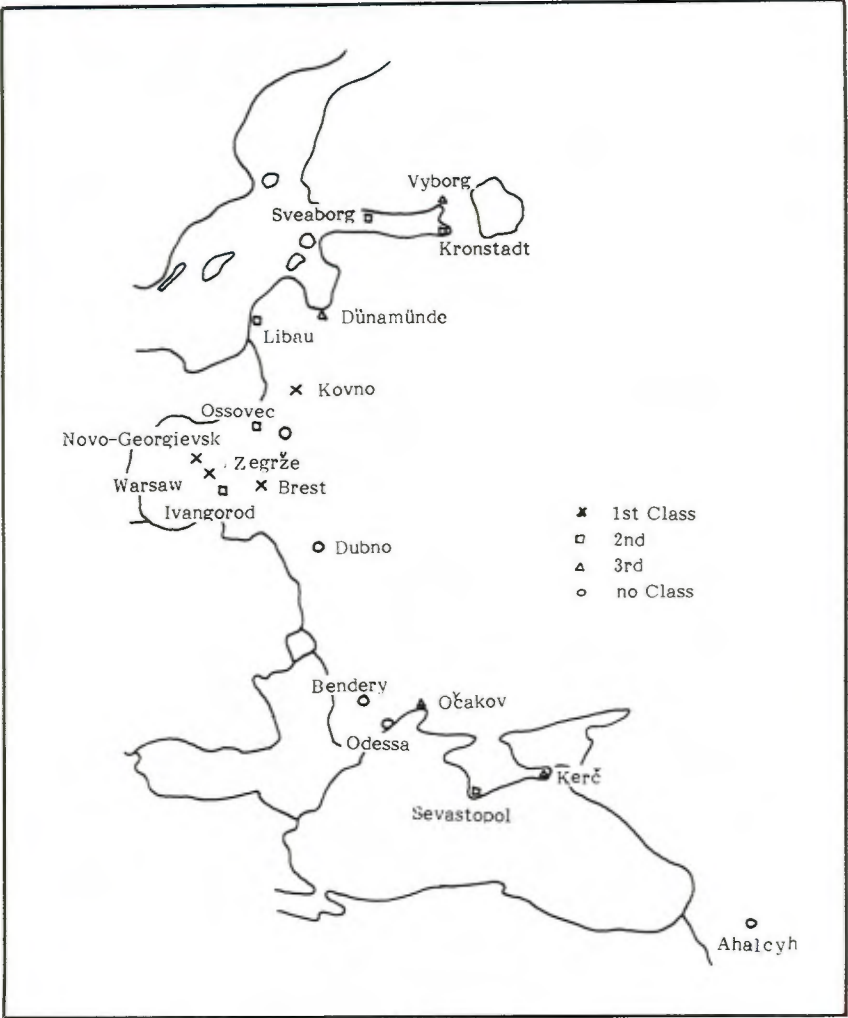
Map 10. Planned troop concentrations, 1897
 ("Historique de la concentration russe de 1882 à 1902.
 Croquis VIII: Concentration russe Janvier 1897".
 EMATSH 7 N 1509)



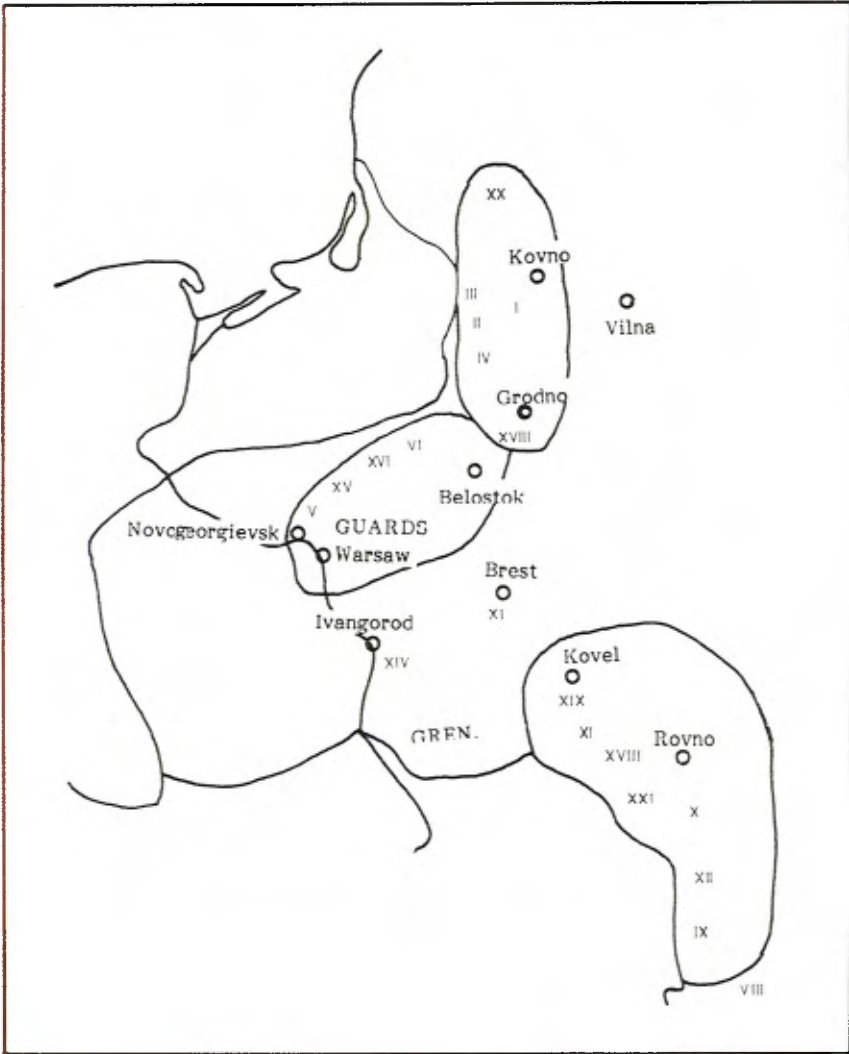
Map 11. Troops assembled for intervention in Turkey, 1897
 (Moulin to war minister 1.II 1897. EMATSH 7 N 1474)



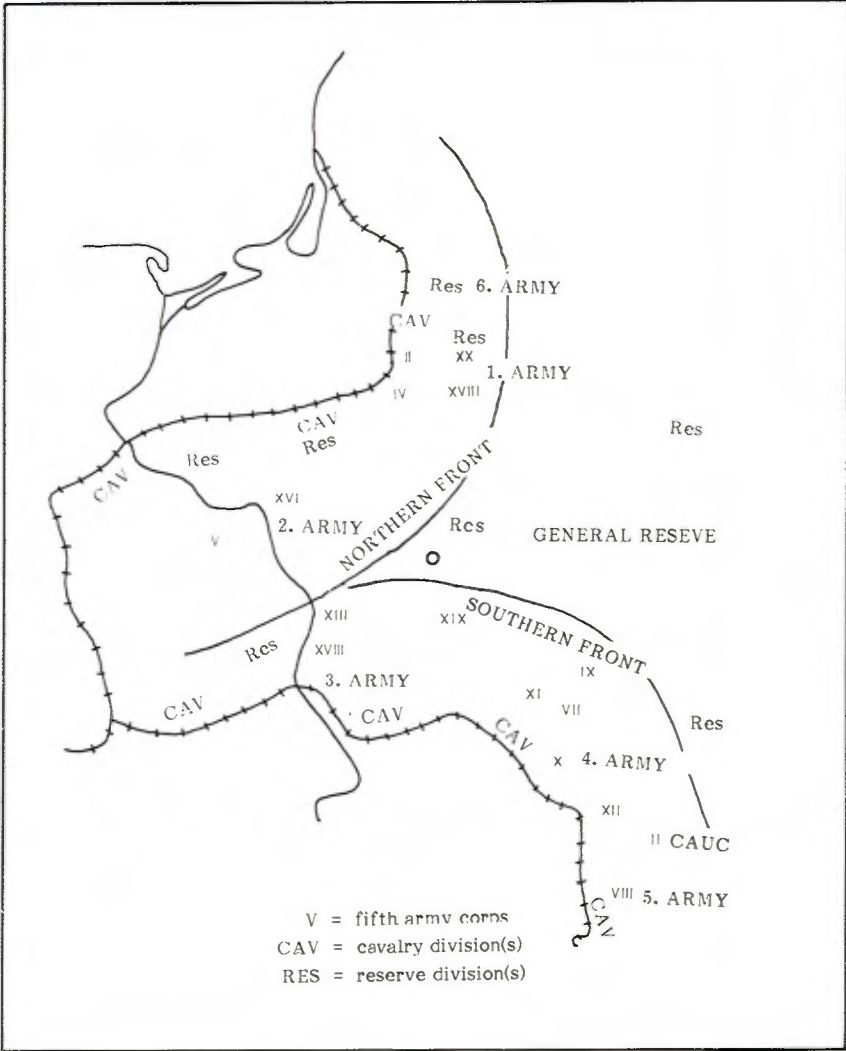
Map 12. Russia's Central Asian position



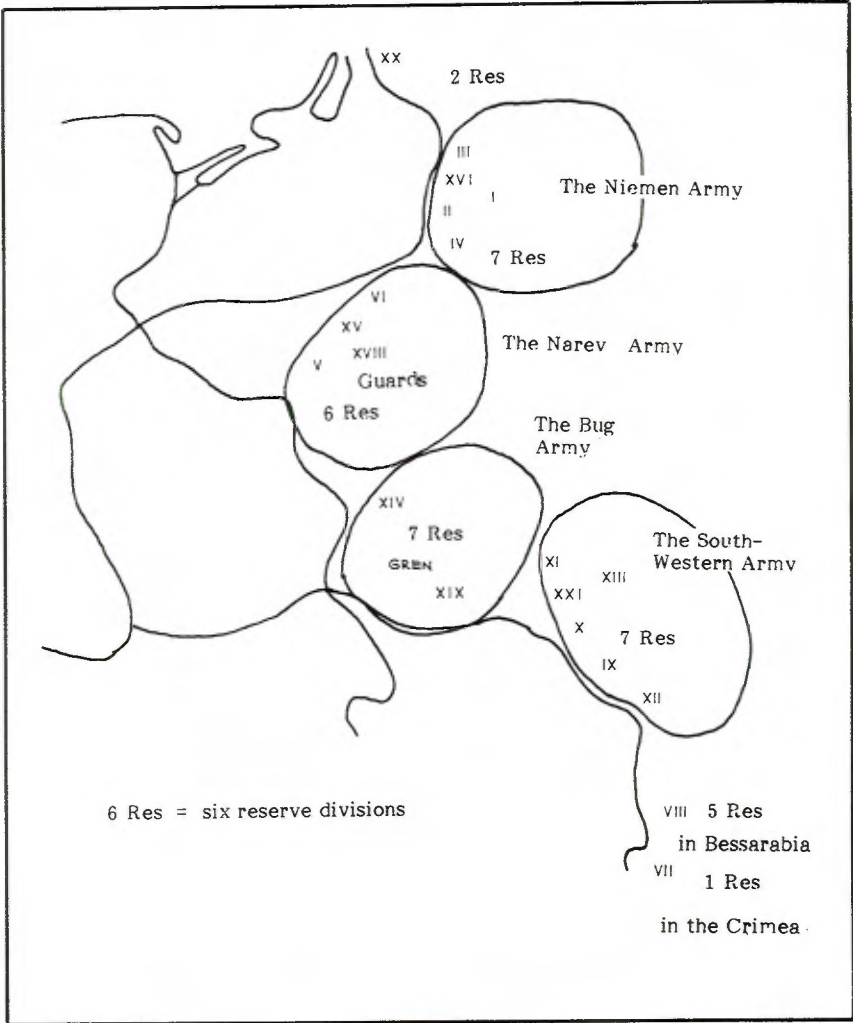
Map 13. Principal fortresses in European Russia
 ("Note sur l'armée russe II". EMATSH 7 N 1506)



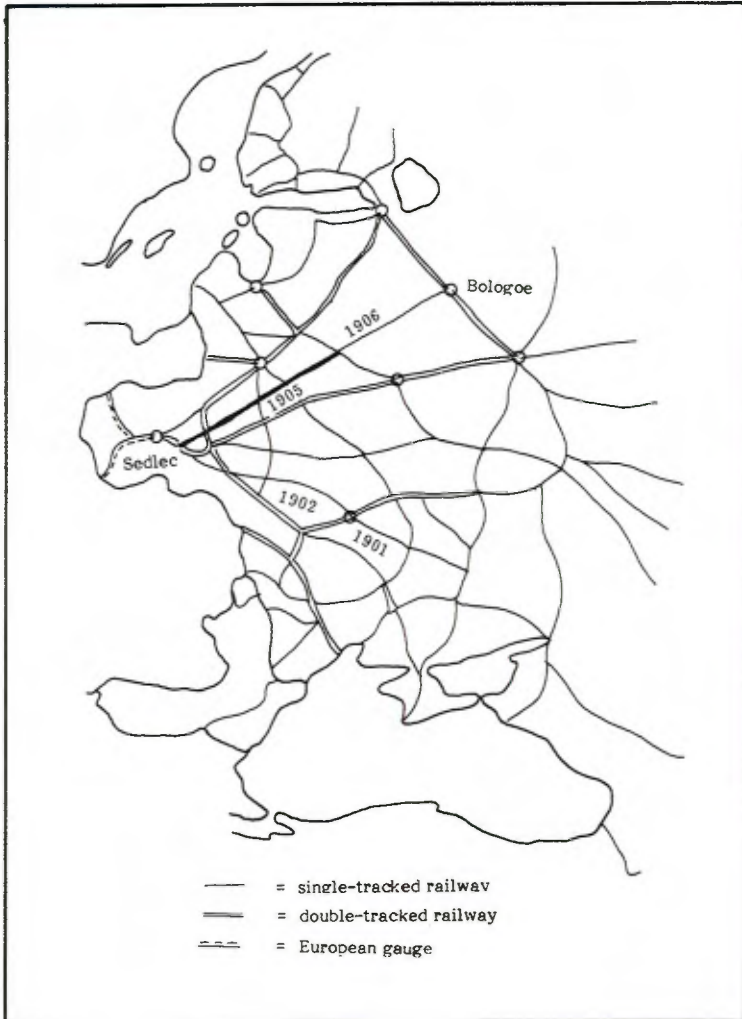
Map 14. Planned troop concentrations, 1900
 ("Historique de la concentration russe de 1882 à 1902.
 Croquis IX: Concentration russe en 1900". EMATSH 7 N
 1509)



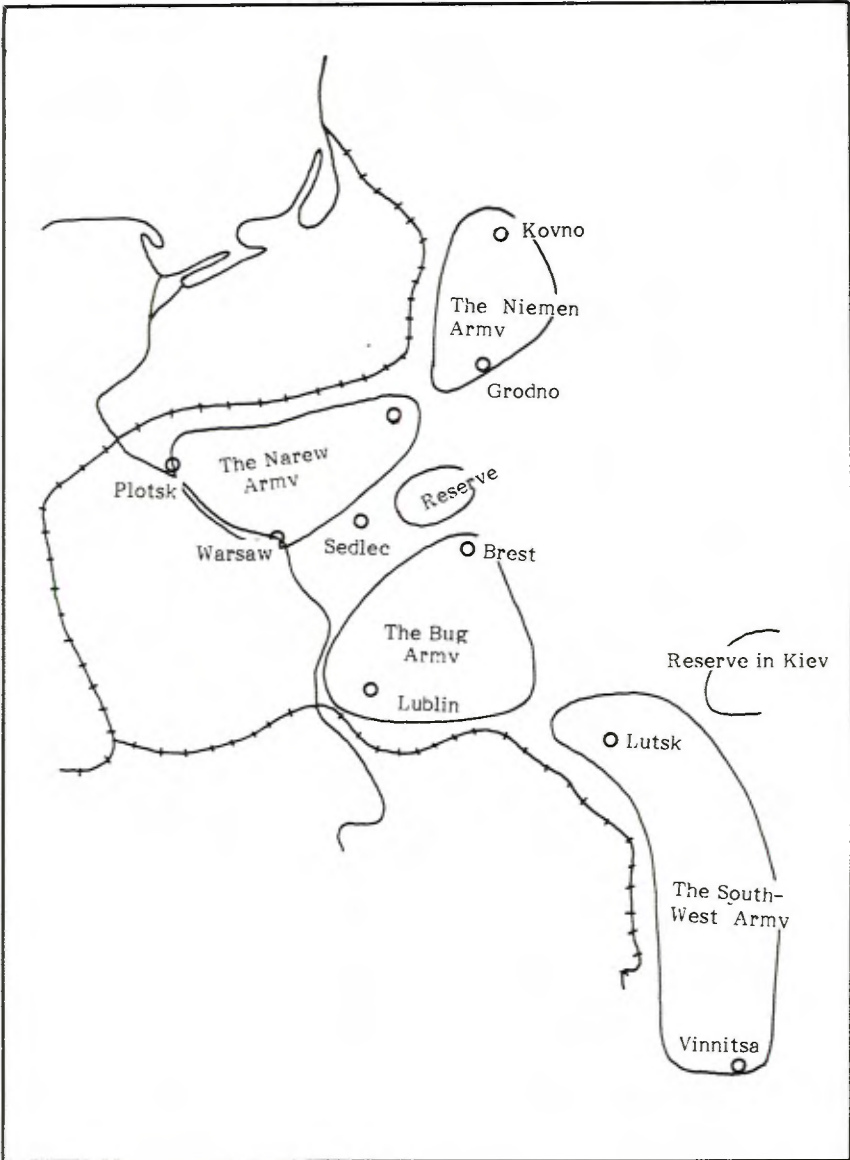
Map 15. Troop concentrations, 1900, according to Zaiončkovskii. (Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny*, Karta n:o 7. Unidentified divisions are indicated "RES", but some of them may be active divisions)



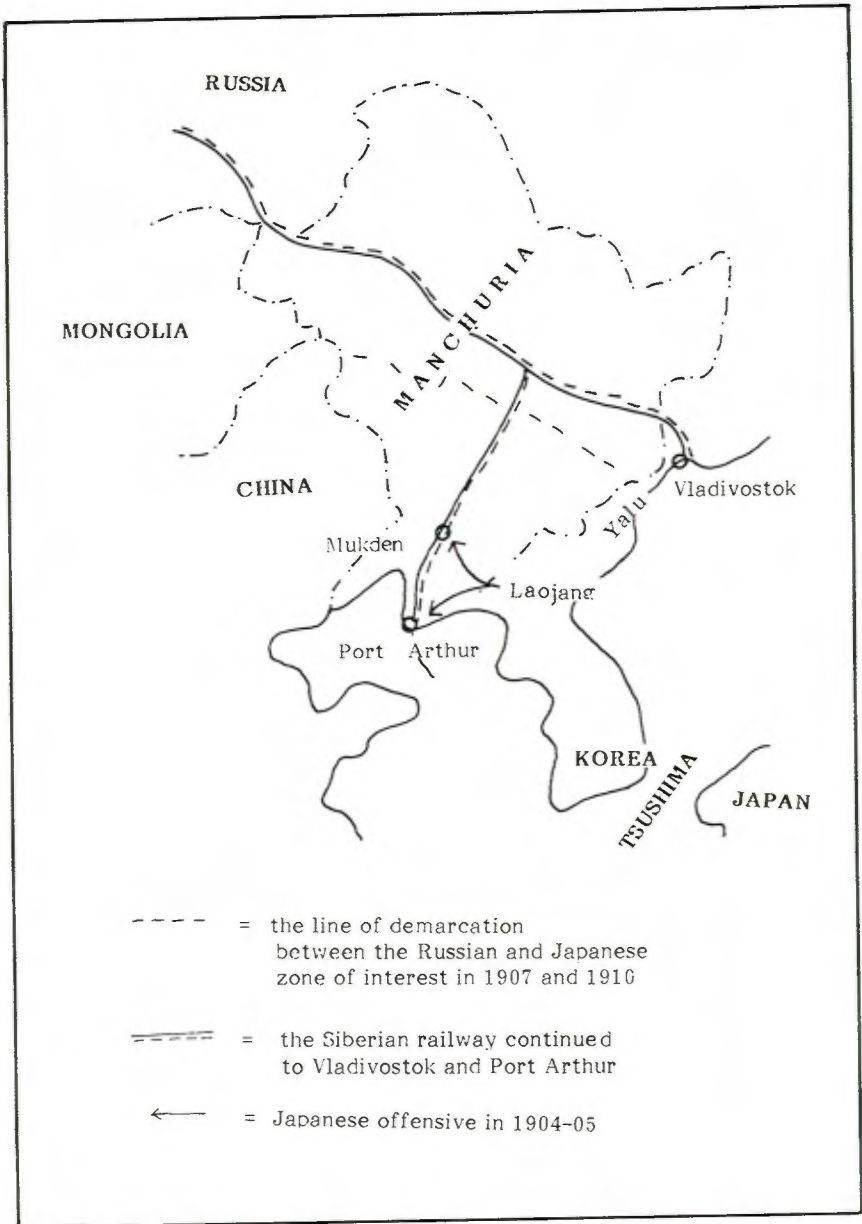
Map 16. Planned troop concentrations, 1902.
 ("Concentration russe en 1902". EMATSH 7 N 1537)



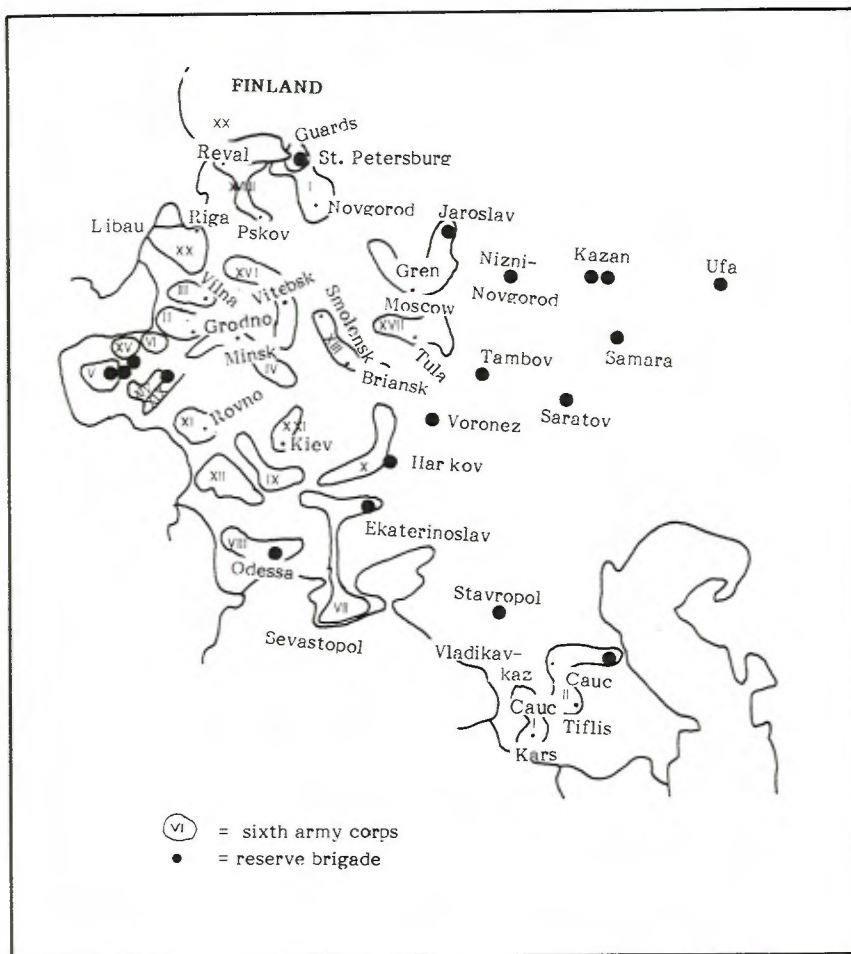
Map 17. Sedlec-Bologoe railway



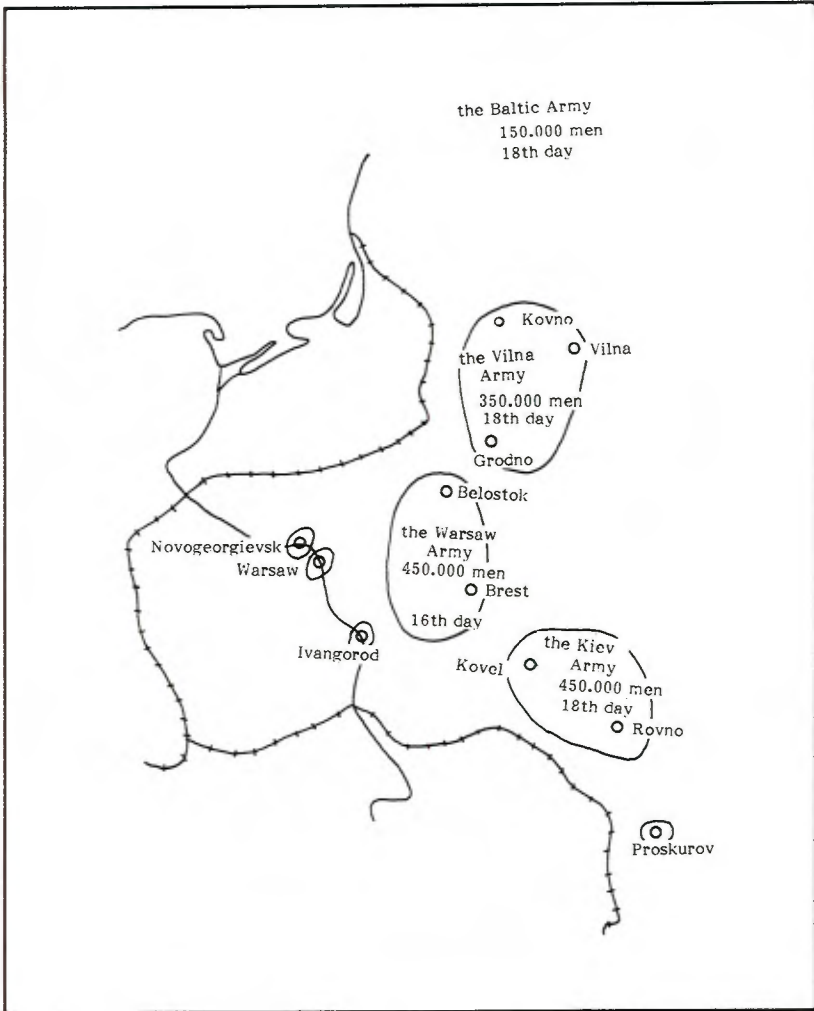
Map 18. "Map drawn by Pendezec", 1903.
 ("Rapport du Général Pendezec, Août 1903". AMAE
 C.P. Russie N.S. 36)



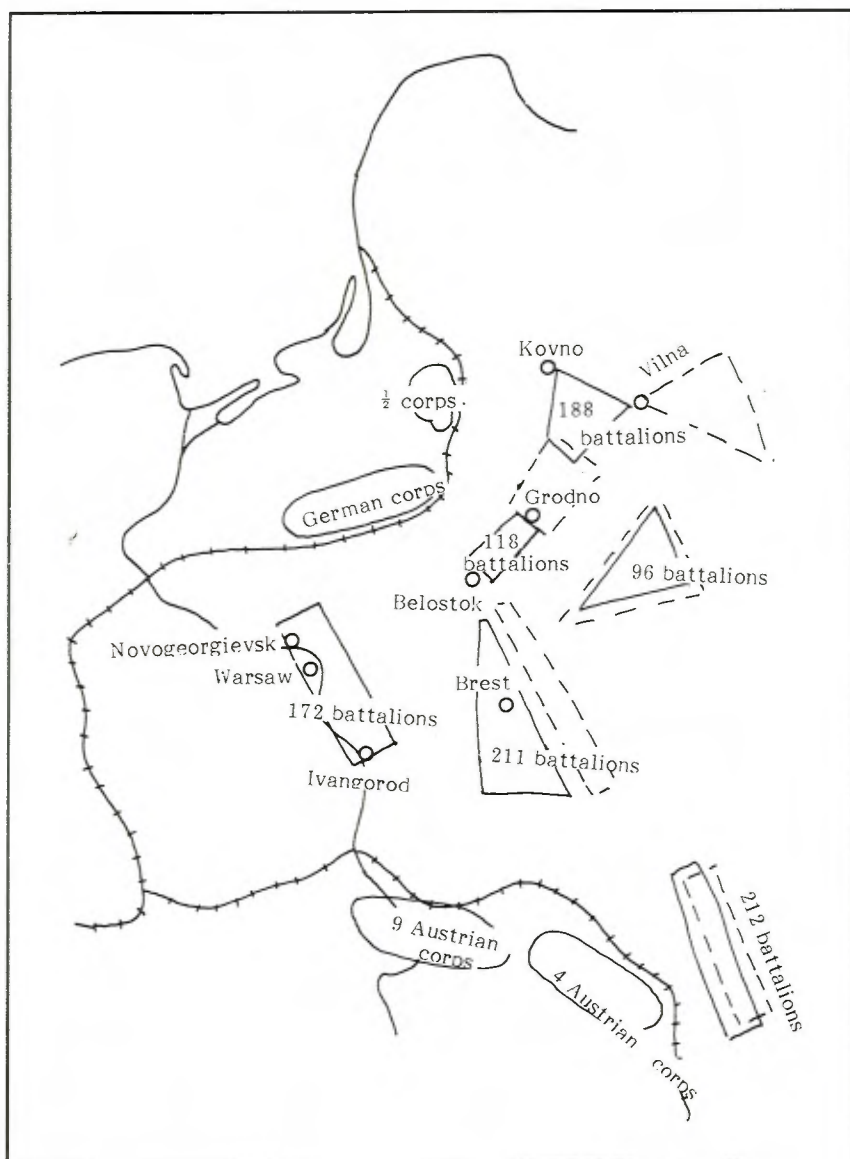
Map 19. The theatre of war in the Far East



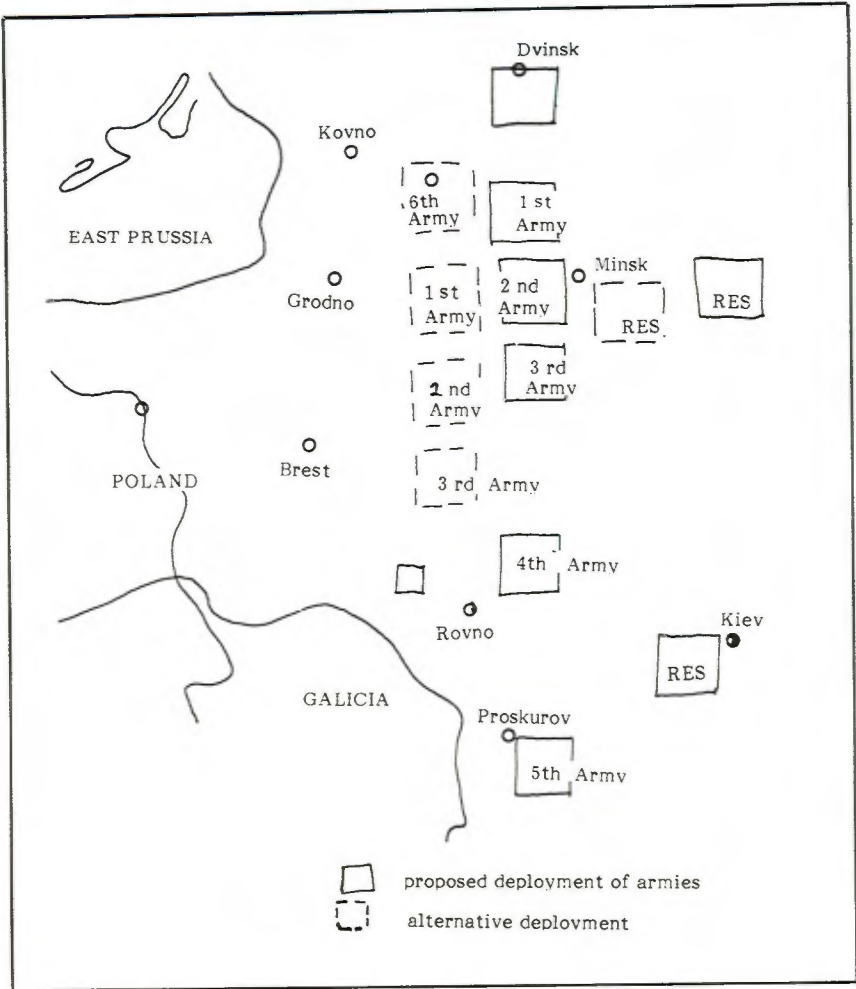
Map 20. The garrison areas of the Russian army before the reform of 1910
 ("L'armée russe." Conférence développée par M.le Lieutenant Schlattery. Association des officiers subalternes de l'Ecole d'Instruction d'Infanterie de l'Ecole Militaire, Paris, Année 1911—1912")



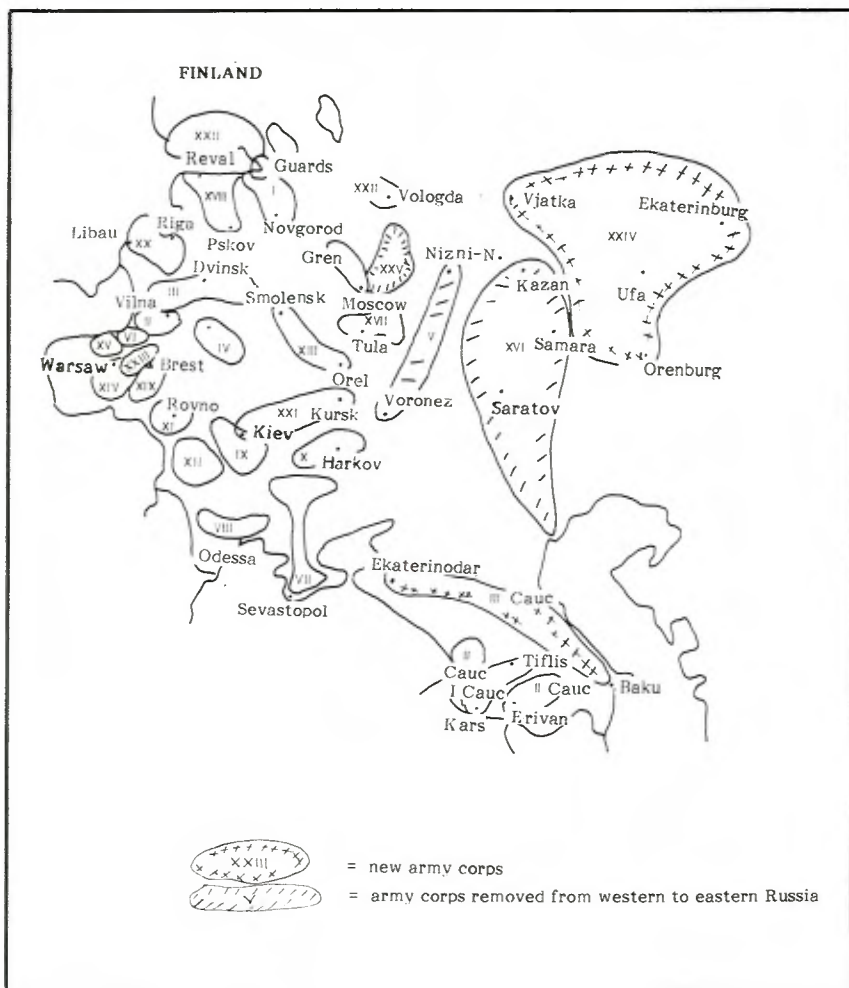
Map 21. Planned troop concentrations, 1909, according to information given to the French military attaché ("Concentration russe, 1909". Matton to war minister, September 1910. EMATSH 7 N 1537)



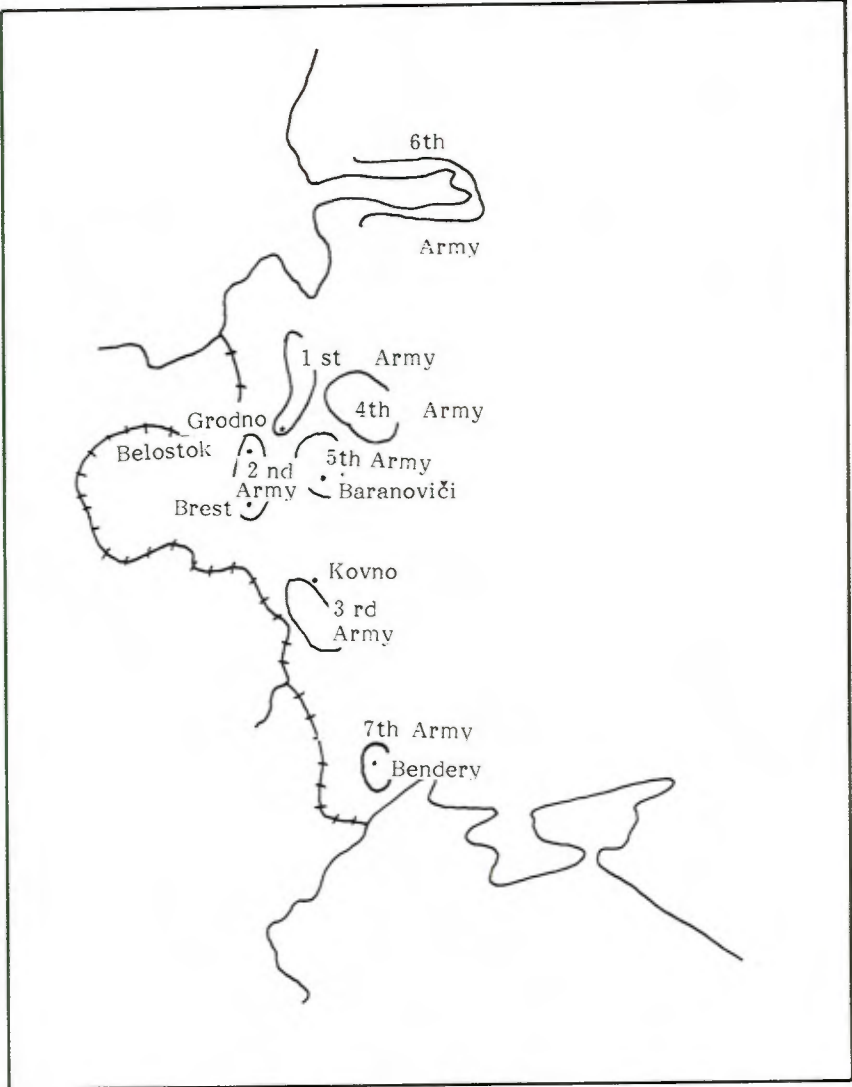
Map 22. Planned troop concentrations, 1908, according to Zaiončkovskii
 (Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny*, Karta n:o 10)



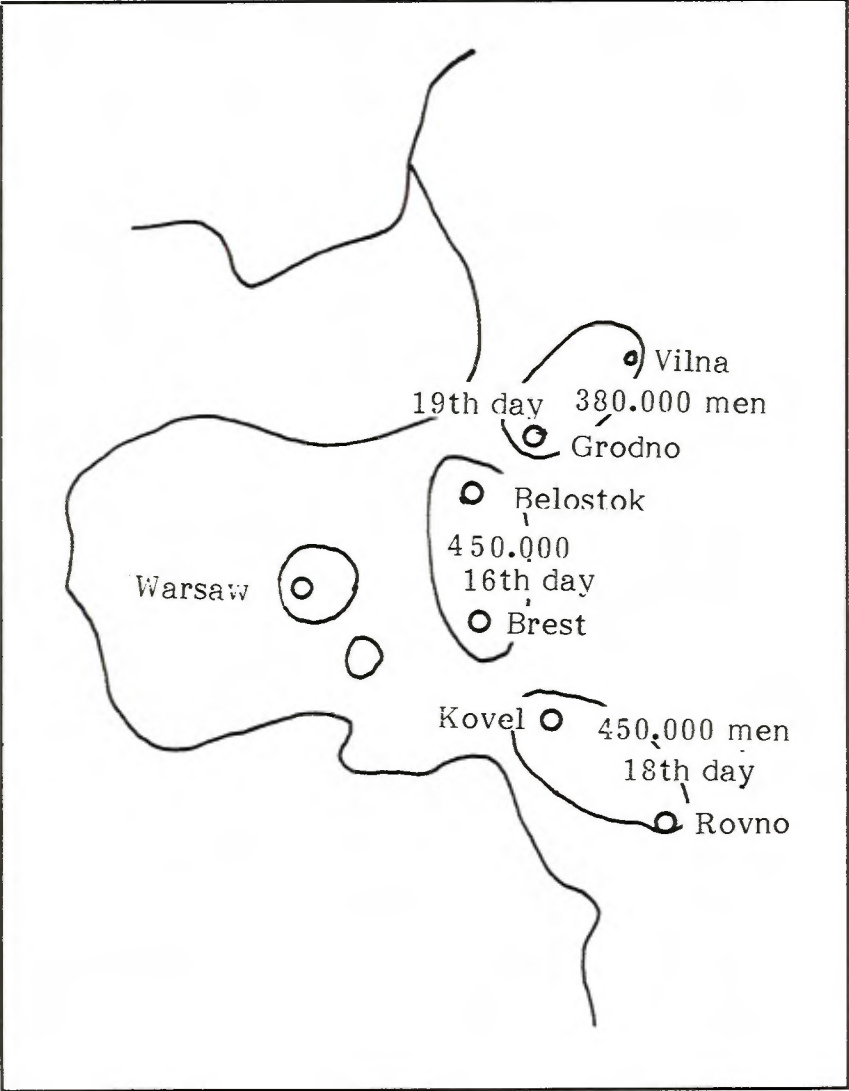
Map 23. Proposed troop concentrations, 1903, according to Zaiončkovskii (Zaiončkovskii, *Plany voiny*, Karta n:o 9)



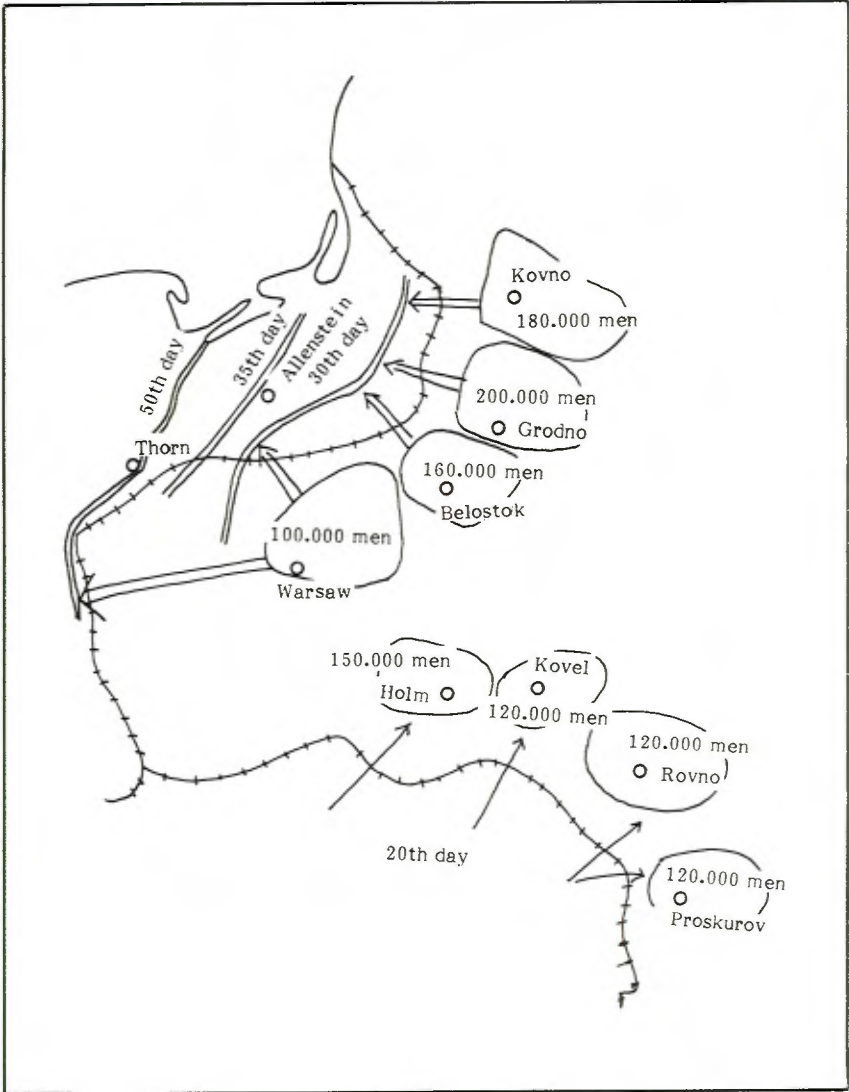
Map 24. The garrison areas of the Russian army after the reform of 1910
 ("L'armée russe. Conference développée par M. le Lieutenant Schlattery. Association des officiers subalternes de l'Ecole d'Instruction d'Infanterie de l'Ecole Militaire. Paris, année 1911—1912")



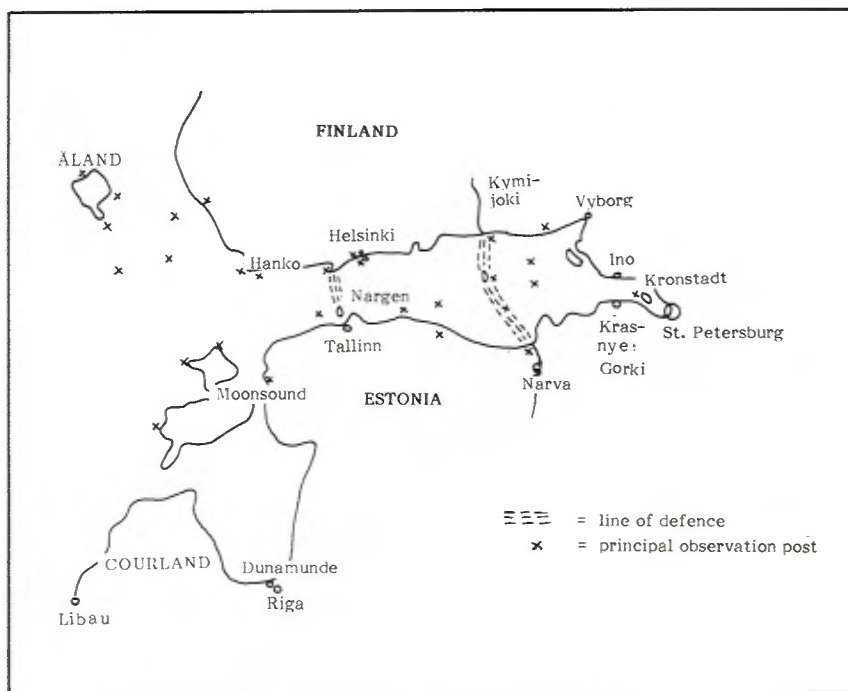
Map 25. Planned troop concentrations, 1910, according to Zaiončkovskiĭ
(Zaiončkovskiĭ, *Plany voiny*, Karta n:o 12)



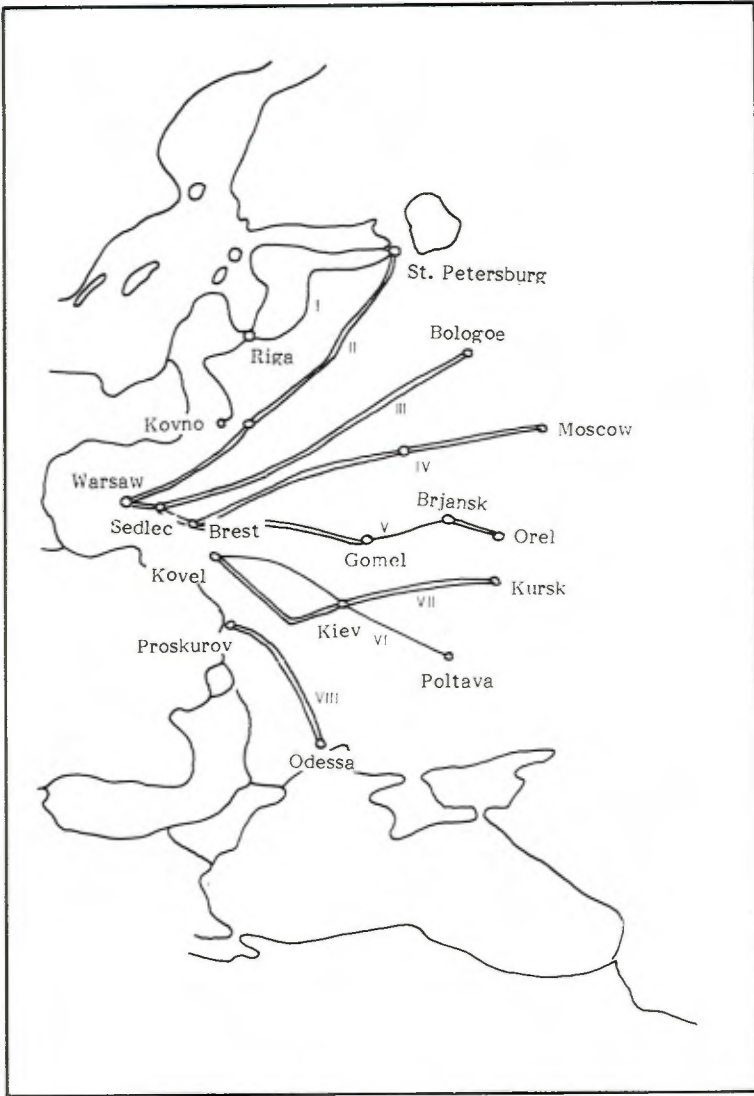
Map 26. Planned troop concentrations, 1910, according to the information given to the French military attaché ("Pièces prêtes 1910". EMATSH 7 N 1537)



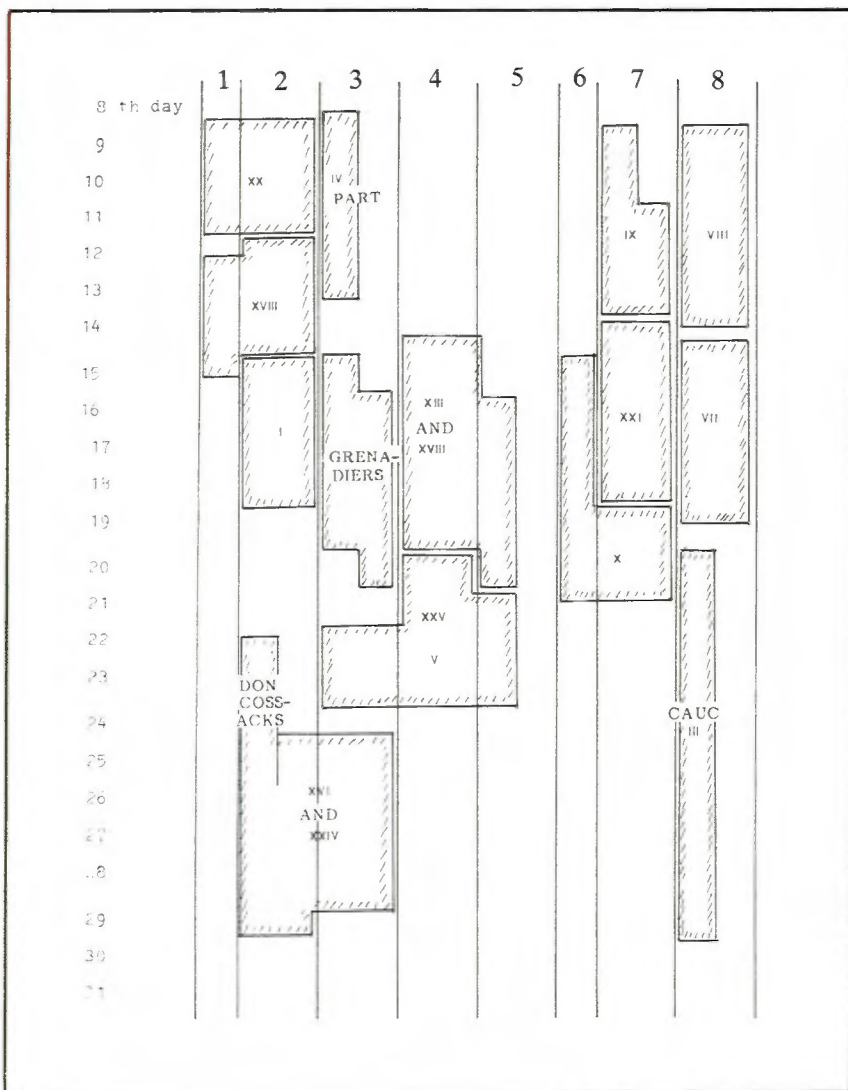
Map 27. Planned troop concentrations on the 23rd day after mobilization and the proposed action, according to Colonel Janin
 (Croquis joint à l'étude du LtColonel Janin "Au sujet de la valeur de la coopération russe". EMATSH 7 N 1537)



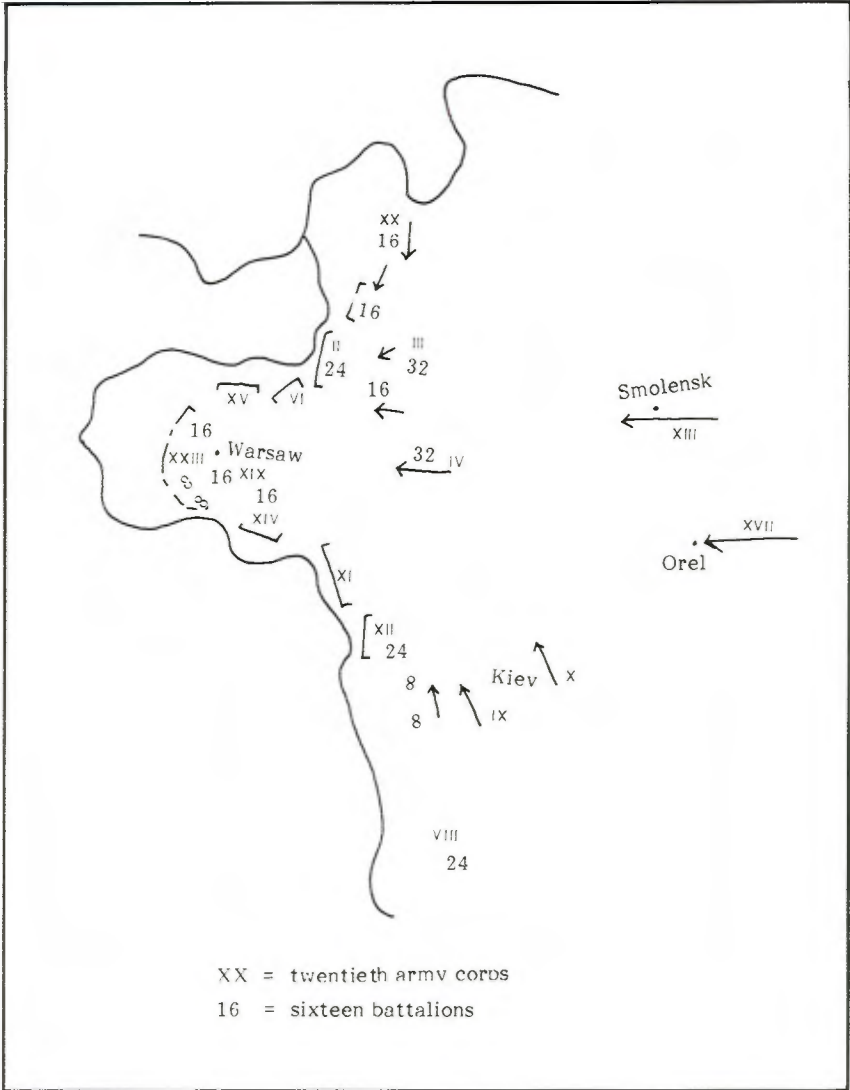
Map 28. Planned defence of the approaches to St. Petersburg ("Golfe de Finlande". Rapport annuel 8.I 1910. SHM BB 7 n:o 120 r)



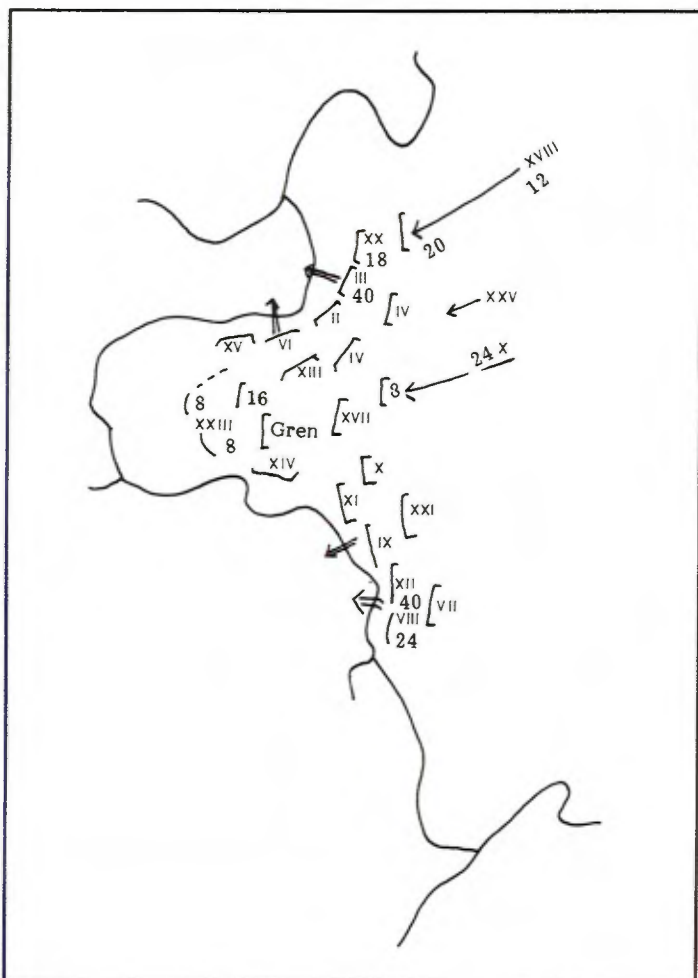
Map 29. The eight railway lines available for the concentration of the Russian army
 ("Carte de Chemins de fer russes en 1913. Circonscriptions Militaires". EMATSH 7 N 1537)



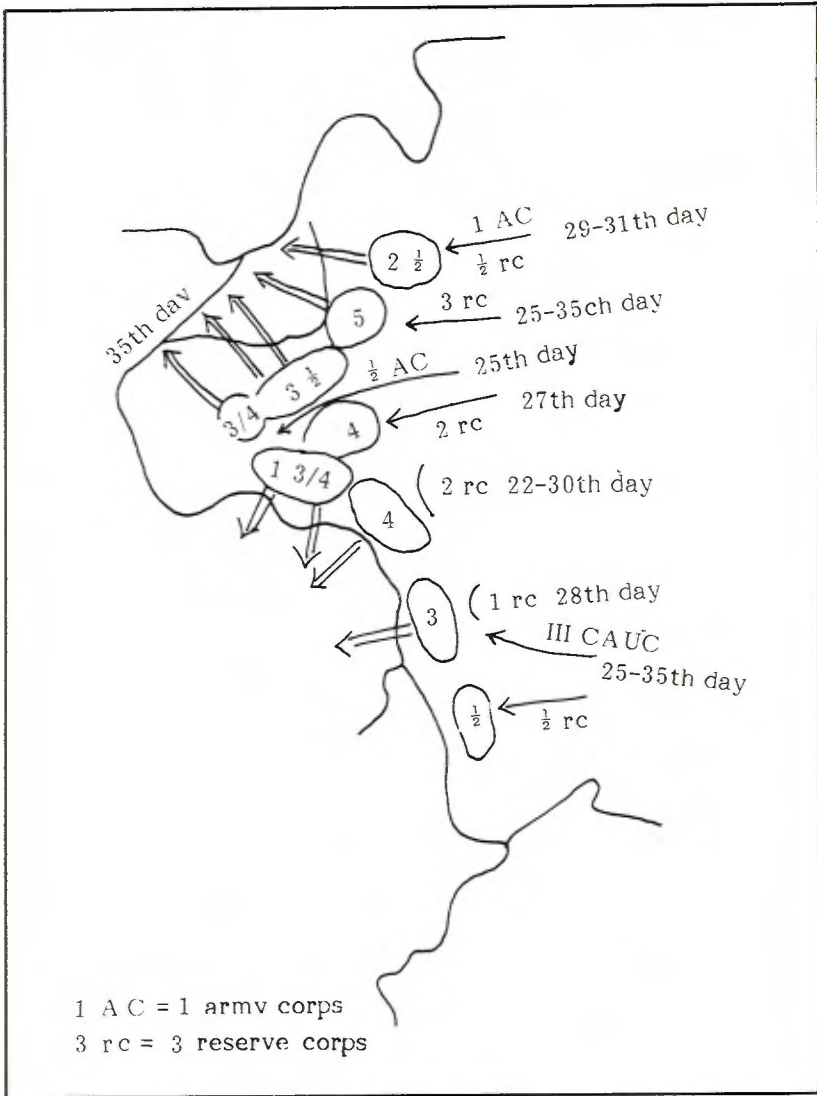
Graph 30. Graph of the utilization of the railway lines by the army corps arriving from the interior of the empire ("Emploi des troupes actives Russes en cas de guerre. Etude fait en Octobre-Novembre 1911, Fevrier 1913". EMATSH 7 N 1538)



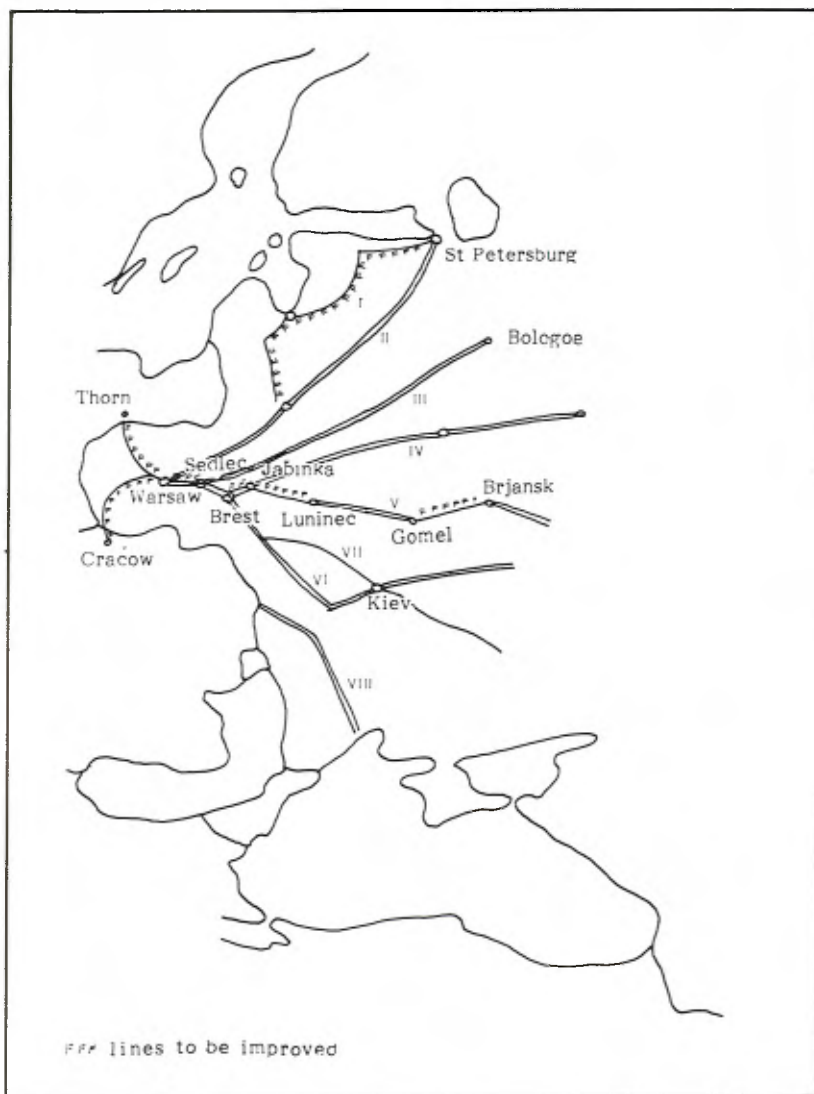
Map 31. The progress of the Russian troop concentrations I: the eighth day.
 ("Frontière Occidentale de la Russie, 8ème jour".
 EMATSH 7 N 1538)



Map 32. The progress of the Russian troop concentrations II: the fifteenth-eighteenth day. First contact with the enemy on the fifteenth day.
 ("Frontière Occidentale de la Russie, 15me jour, 18me jour". EMATSH 7 N 1538)

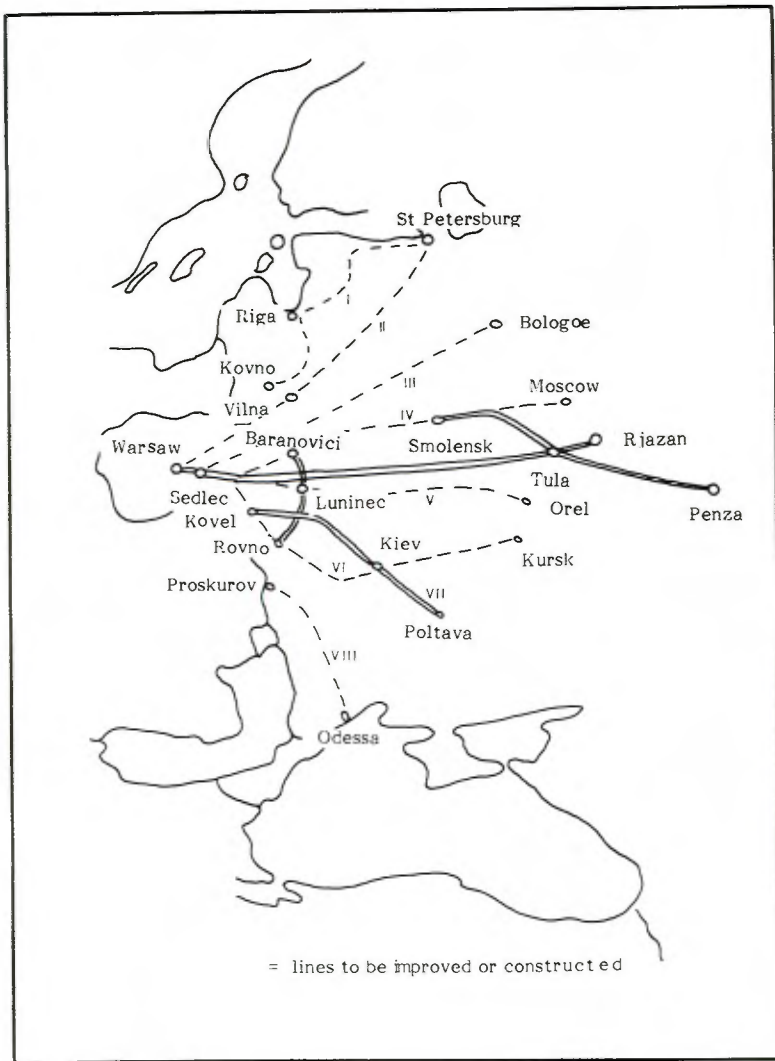


Map 34. The progress of the Russian troop concentrations IV: the twenty-third day, offensive begins.
 ("Croquis schématique de la Concentration Russe le 23^e jour. Etude du 2^e Bureau de l'Etat Major de l'armée. Août 1912". EMATSH 7 N 1535)



Map 35. Railway improvements demanded by the chiefs of staff in 1912

("Developpement des lignes demandées. Décembre 1913". Wehrlin to war minister 20.XII 1913/2.I 1914. EMATSH 7 N 1540)



Map 36. Railway programme discussed by Joffre and Žilinskiĭ in August 1913
 (Developpement des lignes demandées. Decembre 1913".
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