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# Russian Commerce Raiders in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, 1904

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Patrick J. Rollins

**T**HE NAVAL MUSEUM IN ST. PETERSBURG once commemorated the Russo-Japanese War with photos of riddled warships and pieces of armor plate pierced by Japanese shells. That conflict yielded Russia no glorious trophies of war to adorn its display cases or walls. The literary record too is a dismal litany of tragedy and defeat, relieved only by occasional episodes of individual and collective heroism. The Russian tragedy was rooted in bureaucratic ineptitude and the failure of the tsarist leadership to coordinate the empire's foreign, military, and naval policies and capabilities. Japan's assault on the Russian fleet on the night of 26–27 January 1904—Admiral S.O. Makarov had warned in 1896 of a surprise attack—caught the Russian army and navy unprepared for war in the Far East.<sup>1</sup> Russia's First Pacific Squadron died slowly and ignominiously at anchor at Port Arthur, from February 1904 to May 1905, slain by the siege guns of the Japanese army. The Second Pacific Squadron fared no better. After an epic voyage from the Baltic, it was destroyed by Admiral Togo's fleet on 27–28 May 1905 in the Korea Strait off the island of Tsushima.

Notwithstanding the disastrous outcome, at the onset of war the Russian navy might well have won the war or at least have contributed to victory in two ways. The most obvious was to regain command of the Yellow Sea and isolate the Japanese army in Korea and Manchuria. That was, in fact, the goal of Admiral Makarov after he took command of the First Pacific Squadron at the end of February 1904, but it was lost with him in the *Petropavlovsk*, which hit a mine,

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exploded, and sank with nearly all hands on 13 April 1904. Thereafter, that squadron, after one unsuccessful effort to reach the relative safety of Vladivostok, waited to be rescued from its trap in Port Arthur.<sup>2</sup>

The other possibility—quite overlooked both in Russian and Western histories—was the *guerre de course*: commerce raiding, or, in Russian, *kreiserstvo*. In July 1904 the Russians began to apply concepts of cruiser warfare that had been conceived after the Crimean War and developed over the next fifty years. The main difference between the idea and its application was that the Russians had always assumed the enemy would be England.

### Origin and Development of Cruiser Warfare

Defeat in the Crimea in 1856 forced Russia's naval leaders to reconfigure their strategy and policy to meet the country's new circumstances as a defeated and isolated power. They needed a strategy that, under the worst of conditions, could cope with another Anglo-French coalition. Consequently, they decided to concentrate their limited resources in the Baltic and Gulf of Finland to ensure control of those waters while (anticipating the *jeune école*) eschewing command of the sea everywhere else.<sup>3</sup> Offensive operations on the high seas were to be the province of commerce raiders. That requirement led to renewed emphasis on long training voyages and the construction of a force of commerce raiders.<sup>4</sup> The rebuilding and modernization of the navy was the work of a number of liberal reformers led by the war minister, D.A. Miliutin, and the naval chief (or "General Admiral"), Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich.<sup>5</sup>

By 1860 the Admiralty had thirty-three newly built oceangoing sail and steam-propelled frigates, corvettes, and clippers (small, screw-driven vessels with up to sixteen guns). In 1863, at the height of the American Civil War, Russia, facing the threat of war with England and France over Poland, sent a squadron under Admiral S.S. Lesovsky from Kronstadt to spend the winter in New York; at the same time, the Pacific Squadron, under Admiral A.A. Popov, put into San Francisco. The world correctly interpreted these visits of the Russian fleet as a demonstration of support for the Union cause, but the underlying purpose behind the gesture was to position those ships for an offensive against British commerce in the event of war.<sup>6</sup>

The success of the Confederate raider *Alabama* made a strong impression on Russian naval planners, who reasoned that the toll she inflicted on Union shipping validated their confidence in commerce raiding. They saw *guerre de course* as their best means of countering British naval supremacy and contending with England on the high seas.<sup>7</sup> In 1876–77, during a crisis that was to lead to war with Turkey, a Russian squadron once again wintered in American waters for the purpose of preparing for *guerre de course* in the event of war with England,

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which supported Turkey. That squadron returned uneventfully to Russia in April 1877, just as war broke out between Russia and Turkey.

In the wider international crisis following the war, the Main Naval Staff found itself with no viable option but commerce raiding. The Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878) marked Russia's victory over the Turks and expanded its influence in the Balkans but provoked the immediate opposition of Great Britain. London sent its Mediterranean fleet into the Sea of Marmora, where it stood poised to attack Russia's Black Sea coast, rendered defenseless by the Treaty of Paris of 1856. With no forces in a position to challenge England, the Navy responded by placing orders in the United States for four new steamships that it intended to refit and arm as cruisers to prey on British shipping in the Atlantic. In April 1878 it sent more than six hundred officers and men to America to man them. The crisis ended in July 1878 when the Congress of Berlin nullified the Treaty of San Stefano and Russia accepted Europe's verdict.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, however, in an extraordinary outburst of patriotism, a number of officials and citizens, embittered by England's threats and then by their country's diplomatic defeat at Berlin, had launched a public campaign to purchase a number of vessels to be donated to the Navy for conversion to commerce raiders.<sup>9</sup> Neither encouraged nor endorsed by the Navy, the project nevertheless enjoyed the highest patronage, including that of the heir to the throne, the Grand Duke Aleksandr Aleksandrovich (the future Aleksandr III, who reigned 1881–94). His tutor and confidant, K.P. Pobedonostsev (soon to become Director-General of the Holy Synod, the chief administrator of the Russian Orthodox Church), headed the fund-raising committee, which conducted a boisterous campaign of public meetings. Metropolitan and provincial newspapers generated public support by popularizing the cruiser strategy that had been echoing through naval chambers since the Crimean War. This selection from a Penza provincial newspaper is typical.

As a naval power, England is practically unassailable by a continental power like Russia, since it is impossible for our army to attack the British Isles. England can be attacked only by the sea, but that requires powerful naval forces. Consequently other means are needed, as they were in the war against Turkey.

Since England prospers because of her commerce, that commerce must be attacked everywhere throughout the world—its very existence must be threatened. But the only way we can inflict sufficient damage is with cruisers—armed vessels fast enough to overtake English merchantmen wherever they can be found. Since English vessels ply every sea, the cruisers will have to operate out of range of the British fleet, in areas where they can safely capture enemy merchant ships, which are normally unarmed, and thus deprive England not only of the vessels but also of their cargo.

At first glance, such a struggle might seem hopeless. One might question the damage that 20–50 cruisers could do against a naval power with ten thousand merchant vessels. But the history of warfare demonstrates that in the course of a year, cruisers can destroy merchant vessels faster than they can be replaced. And as we well know, trade is England's lifeblood. Its industry is completely dependent on it, and it must import food to feed itself. Thus in a war with England, cruisers would have a devastating effect on its ability to make war. . . . Confronted by a fleet of cruisers, England would have to divide its naval forces, deploying some for coastal defense, some for convoy duty, and some to hunt our cruisers. As a result, nearly all of its fleet would have to be used to counteract our cruisers.<sup>10</sup>

Fundraising began in April 1878. By May, over two million rubles had been collected, and public contributions nearly doubled in the next year. The first three ships were purchased in Germany in June 1878; they were taken to the naval base at Kronstadt and armed for commerce raiding. By mid-July they were ready for sea, but by then the crisis with England had passed; the vessels were disarmed and organized in May 1879 into a remarkable entity known as the "Volunteer Fleet"—a commercial enterprise controlled initially by the Ministry of Finance and after 1883 by the Naval Ministry.<sup>11</sup> Its headquarters were established at Odessa on the Black Sea; Pobedonostsev served as the first chairman of its board of directors, known as the Committee of the Volunteer Fleet. Its business was to operate a fleet of "rapid, transoceanic steamships" that in wartime could be loaned to the Navy and converted into auxiliary cruisers, hospital and stores ships, and transports. New ships added to the Fleet were selected or designed in consultation with the Navy with a view toward their possible naval service as transports or cruisers. All ships of the Volunteer Fleet were manned by retired and reserve naval officers and seamen, governed by naval regulations and subject to naval discipline.<sup>12</sup> The Volunteer Fleet, with headquarters at Odessa on the Black Sea, was officially chartered in May 1879.

For the next twenty-five years the Volunteer Fleet provided regular cargo and passenger service between the Black Sea and the Far East. Until the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the Fleet was the bridge that linked Russia with its possessions on the Pacific. It flourished on subsidies and government contracts. It transported convicts to Sakhalin Island for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It delivered the ordnance and other materiel that fortified Vladivostok and developed the Amur River Flotilla. It brought the rails and equipment for the Ussuri section of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and, after the occupation of Port Arthur in 1898, it helped the Navy move from Vladivostok to its new base in Manchuria.

Meanwhile, under Tsar Aleksandr III, the Navy itself was moving decisively toward the creation of a balanced fleet, a course tentatively set in the 1870s. In June 1882, the tsar approved a twenty-year naval program that emphasized ships

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of the line over a cruiser force.<sup>13</sup> Thus, *jeune école* doctrine was being downgraded in Russia just as it was coming to the fore in France. In Russia, however, even though the instruments of commerce raiding were now subordinated to the requirements of a balanced fleet, they continued to figure prominently in Russian strategy. In 1883, as part of the general reorganization of the naval establishment, the Volunteer Fleet was transferred to the Naval Ministry. Further, in November 1888 the Navy charged a commission under the chairmanship of then-Captain Makarov with planning a cruiser campaign for the Pacific Ocean.

### Preparations for War with Japan

In that planning, the adversaries were to be England and China.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, despite considerable discussion of the problem of Japan in the intervening years, by the time the Russo-Japanese War broke out, the Navy still had no firm plan (and indeed inadequate resources) for operations against oceanic commerce bound for that nation. The war began on the night of 26–27 January 1904, with Japan's attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur, but it was not until 26 February that a committee met under the presidency of the General Admiral, Grand Duke Aleksei Aleksandrovich, to consider whether and how to conduct cruiser operations against Japan.<sup>15</sup> After an affirmative decision on the former issue, another month passed before a panel of captains could develop a concrete plan that called for the deployment of eight cruisers—two in the western Arabian Sea and six in the Pacific between the East Indies and the coast of Japan. That plan was discarded, however, when Admiral Z.P. Rozhdestvensky, who had been designated to lead the Second Pacific Squadron from the Baltic to the Far East, objected to it. Rozhdestvensky feared that cruisers operating in the path of the Second Squadron would antagonize neutrals whose ports might be needed and invite Japanese cruisers to attack his colliers and harass his fleet during refueling. In addition, the naval chiefs belatedly discovered that they did not have enough cruisers to carry out the plan. Ironically, the European navy that more than any other had consistently prepared for cruiser operations found itself at war without a single modern cruiser that could be used against oceanic commerce. Consequently the planners scaled down the operation and shifted it from the war zone to European and African waters.<sup>16</sup>

**Activating the Volunteer Fleet.** As early as 20 February 1901 the Naval Ministry had designated three Volunteer Fleet ships—*Saratov*, *Orel*, and *Peterburg*—for transfer to naval duties in the event of war.<sup>17</sup> In 1902 the Navy expanded the list to six by adding the *Moskva*, *Kherson*, and *Smolensk*.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the ministry ordered the commander of the Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol to prepare to receive and

arm the *Saratov* and *Peterburg*.<sup>19</sup> *Saratov*, ultimately deemed unfit for cruiser duty, was replaced by the *Smolensk*, which originally had been meant for Admiral R.N. Viren's 1903 Pacific reinforcement squadron as a supply ship. (Viren would only reach Djibouti before the threat of war forced his recall in February 1904.)

The task of converting the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* began at the Sevastopol navy yard in April 1904. Although designed and built for possible service as auxiliary cruisers, their main business had been the carriage of passengers and general cargo. Consequently they required extensive modification before they could be used in cruiser operations. Conversion included expansion of their coal bunkering capacity, reinforcement of their decks to support 120mm guns, and installation of gun mounts, munitions lockers, and ammunition hoists. Because (as explained below) they could not pass through the Turkish Straits as warships, all weapons had to be concealed below deck. Therefore they also had to be re-equipped with gear to lift the guns from storage and with deck rails and trolleys to move them into place once the ships had reached the Red Sea. Their relatively spacious cabins and salons had to be packed with bunks to house the large prize crews they would carry. One civilian amenity that was not altered, however, was the ships' large refrigerators; as a result, the crews enjoyed somewhat better food than sailors in regular naval vessels. Both ships were ready for sea at the end of June.

The 5,432-ton *Peterburg*, built in 1894 in Hebburn, England, by Hawthorn Leslie, had a clipper bow, two funnels, and three masts rigged for sailing. Her engine generated 11,000 horsepower, giving her a maximum speed of nineteen knots. Third in a series that included the *Orel* (1890) and *Saratov* (1891), *Peterburg* had a range of 12,000 miles when fully loaded with 2,800 tons of coal. As an auxiliary cruiser, or "cruiser second-rate," she carried a crew of 332 men and seventeen officers, including a prize crew of about two hundred. Her armament, initially stored below deck, consisted of seven 120mm, six 47mm, and ten 37mm guns, and also several machine guns.

The *Smolensk*, also built by Hawthorn Leslie, had been completed in March 1901. Last in a series that included the *Kherson* (1896) and *Moskva* (1898), she was far superior to them due to modern Belleville boilers that generated 16,500 horsepower and a top speed of twenty knots. With coal bunkering expanded to hold 4,000 tons instead of her peacetime 1,440 tons, her clipper hull and highly efficient dual engines gave her a range of 17,000 miles at a cruising speed of thirteen knots. Her main armament was eight 120mm and eight 75mm guns. She left the Black Sea with a crew of 470 officers and men, including a prize crew of 240.<sup>20</sup>

**Plan of the Operation.** On 8 June 1904, Admiral F.K. Avelan, the naval minister, issued operational orders to Captains 2nd-Rank Ivan Skalsky and Viktor Troyan, commanding respectively the cruisers *Peterburg* and *Smolensk*.<sup>21</sup> As the senior officer, Captain Skalsky was to command the operation. The two were to

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prepare their vessels, then at Sevastopol, for a six-month cruise. Coal was to be stored in all available space, including on deck. They were to give the appearance that they were delivering coal to the fleet in the Far East.

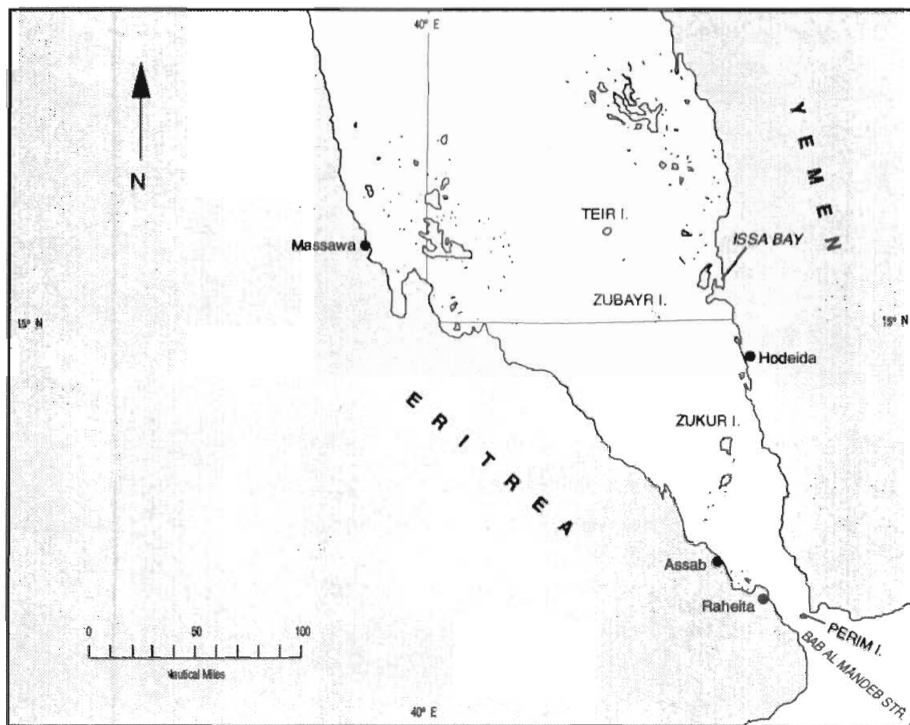
Although the two ships had officially entered naval service on 15 May 1904, their conversions to warships had been accomplished secretly under the cover of sheds. Public notice of their transformation had not been given, and they were not formally enrolled in the naval register. Technically, then, they could not operate as warships, for international law required a belligerent to give the world fair warning that a merchantman had been converted for warfare; interference with commerce by vessels other than naval vessels was (and is) either privateering or piracy. Moreover, *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* could not legally pass the Turkish Straits as warships.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, they could not undertake their mission without violating international law. Grand Duke Aleksandr Aleksandrovich and Admiral Avelan, who personally guided the planning of the operation, were clearly aware that it had to begin by breaking the law. That was why they had to conceal the true character of the ships and why Captain Skalsky's orders read that "for secrecy and deception [*zamas-kirovanie*]" the ships' guns were to remain concealed below decks and all personnel and small arms assigned to boarding parties were to be kept out of sight until the vessels had cleared the Turkish Straits and the Suez Canal.

When directed to sail, the orders continued, the *Peterburg* was to depart first and *Smolensk* to follow in two or three days. During their passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, the ships were to fly the customary commercial flag, a yellow trumpet on a blue field. At Port Said, while awaiting clearance to enter the Suez Canal, they were to be especially careful to conceal the character of their ships and the nature of their mission. On reaching Suez Captain Skalsky was to contact the local agent of the Volunteer Fleet for any changes in the government's list of contraband and for other logistical information. Of particular importance was his need to learn at Port Said the identity of the secret agent in the Yemeni port of Hodeida who would be his telegraphic link to the Naval Ministry.

As soon as the cruisers had cleared the Suez Canal, they were to arm themselves and take up positions near the southern end of the Red Sea, *Smolensk* in the vicinity of Zubayr Island, *Peterburg* to the south around Zukur Island (see map 1). That would put the ships at a distance of about a hundred miles from each other, at the limit of their wireless equipment. *Peterburg* would be in a position to pick up any vessels that eluded the *Smolensk*, which had a wider shipping channel to cover (the main ship channel lay west of Zubayr Island). Because Port Said was well beyond wireless range, the *Smolensk* also had to make a daily run to Hodeida, which was linked by telegraph to Port Said, for instructions that might have been relayed to the agent there. So that searched vessels would not be stopped a second time, *Smolensk* was to give them some means (such as a signal flag, changed daily) of identifying themselves to the



Map 1

Southern Red Sea  
July 1904

Joseph R. Nunes, Jr.

*Peterburg*. On his voyage south from Suez, Skalsky in *Peterburg* was to use his two-day lead to identify a suitable location for the Second Pacific Squadron to rendezvous with its colliers during its transit to the Pacific.<sup>23</sup> He also had to find an anchorage around Zukur Island where he could search ships that had been stopped, for, as senior officer, he was responsible for assessing whether a vessel was in fact bearing contraband and therefore subject to capture.

As for vessels carrying mail (generally identifiable by distinctive flags or pennants and known as "mail packets"), the captains' orders emphasized that the non-postal cargo of such vessels was free from inspection unless there was an especially strong reason to suspect the presence of contraband. However, the actual mail on board any packet (German and French ones excepted) that was bound for the Far East was to be searched; any mail addressed to Japan was to be opened, examined, and, if it contained information useful to the enemy, confiscated.<sup>24</sup> As a rule, merchant vessels found with contraband were to be sent with a prize crew to the Russian port of Libau in the Baltic (modern Liepaia, Latvia), a voyage of 5,300

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miles from the southern end of the Red Sea. If that was not possible, such vessels were to be destroyed, as naval regulations and directives required.<sup>25</sup>

The plan anticipated only ten or twelve days of activity in the Red Sea before the cruisers ran short of fuel. Therefore, a chartered German collier bearing 3,500 tons of coal would be sent through the Canal "exactly two weeks" after the *Peterburg* had passed Suez and would meet the cruisers near the island of Teir. The collier, flying either German or Russian colors, would pick up the latest orders received by the Volunteer Fleet's agent at Suez. The refueling of the cruisers would coincide with the end of their operations in the Red Sea, because the plan anticipated that once shippers learned that the Suez route was no longer safe they would divert their ships around the Cape of Good Hope. By then, however, four other auxiliary cruisers were to be operating in the Atlantic between Cape St. Vincent (northwest of Gibraltar) and the Cape Verde Islands (opposite Dakar on the West African coast).<sup>26</sup> Therefore, after refueling, the cruisers were to move south and resume their activity in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope, on the Indian Ocean side. Captain Skalsky was to define the cruisers' new operating area according to his judgment of weather, shipping lanes, and other local conditions. The schedule developed for the campaign of the two cruisers, counting from the *Peterburg's* departure from Suez, was:

Voyage of the first cruiser from	
Suez to its Red Sea base	3 days
Cruiser operations (Red Sea)	12 days
Refueling (at Red Sea anchorage)	5 days
Cruiser operations (Indian Ocean)	40 days

The cruisers would have enough fuel to maintain stations off the African coast for the planned forty days, after which they were to meet a second collier at the island of Zanzibar in German East Africa, refuel, and receive new orders. If the collier failed to appear within five days, Captain Skalsky was to use the German telegraph in Dar-es-Salaam to contact St. Petersburg ("*Retung*").<sup>27</sup> He was then to purchase enough coal to reach the French colony of Djibouti, proceed there, and await further instructions.

The commanders were advised that some official information might also be sent through the Volunteer Fleet's main office in Odessa and relayed to its agent in Suez. Generally, however, only naval authorities or their agents would communicate with the vessels, and the director of the Volunteer Fleet would be given only general information about its ships. Any statements of government policy or directives appearing in foreign newspapers were to be ignored.

Supplemental instructions stressed precautions to ensure the security of the ships. They reveal the uneasiness of the naval authorities, who were all but certain that Japanese torpedo boats based in England were lurking everywhere, as were,

they suspected, Japanese agents, spies, and saboteurs. The instructions urged "special vigilance and caution" while passing through the Turkish Straits "and especially the Suez Canal." Whether in transit or during operations, the commanders were never to pass or allow another vessel to approach within less than three-quarters of a mile. They were to be particularly watchful of yachts and launches that attempted to approach the cruisers without good reason. In the Suez Canal they were to watch for "suspicious persons along the shore." When anchored in foreign ports they were not to admit "unknown persons or merchants with packages or baskets of merchandise, nor permit anyone to approach the ship with ladders, nor allow boats to come alongside with stores, provisions, fruit, etc.," and so on. In general, the two captains were to be constantly alert to the possibility of an overt or sneak attack against their cruisers.<sup>28</sup> The paranoia that would later transform British trawlers on the Dogger Bank into a Japanese torpedo boat flotilla had already infected the naval establishment.

### Cruiser Operations in the Red Sea, 11–29 July

The first phase of the operation came off exactly as planned.<sup>29</sup> The *Peterburg* left Sevastopol at 7:00 A.M. on 3 July and reached Constantinople at 3:00 P.M. on the following day. She made Port Said at 6:00 A.M. on the 7th and Suez twenty-four hours later. The *Smolensk* followed, as planned, two days later. As soon as each vessel cleared Suez and entered the Red Sea it waited for nightfall to begin mounting its weapons—a ten-hour task. While reconnoitering the area between the islands of Teir and Zubayr in the southern Red Sea on 11 July, the *Peterburg* stopped and searched three merchantmen: the *Crewe Hall*, a British steamer bound for Bombay; *Menelaus*, also British, bound for Shanghai; and *Besoeki*, a Dutchman headed for the Indies. *Smolensk*, meanwhile, stopped the *Dragoman*, a British tanker transporting kerosene from Batumi, on the Black Sea, to Shanghai. All were released after a delay of about four hours. During their stay in the Red Sea, the Russian cruisers detained and searched nineteen merchantmen (see table 1), seized three of them, and sent those off to Libau with prize crews. (All were subsequently released.) Late on 24 July, the chartered German collier *Holsatia* arrived with coal for the cruisers. *Holsatia* also brought alarming news: a large Japanese cruiser accompanied by two colliers had been sighted on a westerly course in the Malacca Straits.<sup>30</sup>

Captain Skalsky could not risk an encounter with an enemy warship anywhere, but especially not in the narrow confines of the Red Sea. In his mission report he wrote, "English newspapers aboard the *Smolensk* indicated that [the Japanese cruiser] had left the Malacca Strait on the 17th; therefore, the commander of the *Smolensk* and I calculated that she could be in the Gulf of Aden

**Table 1**  
**Cruiser Operations in the Red Sea and Along the**  
**East African Coast, July-August 1904**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Vessel</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Destination and Disposition</b>
11 July	<i>Crewe Hall</i>	British	Bombay; searched and released
	<i>Menelaus</i>	British	Shanghai; searched and released
	<i>Besoeki</i>	Dutch	E. Indies; searched and released
	<i>Dragoman</i>	British	Shanghai; searched and released
13 July	<i>Clodmoor</i>	British	Bombay; searched and released
	<i>Bengali</i>	British	Calcutta; searched and released
	<i>Malacca</i>	British	Various Chinese and Japanese ports; alleged contraband confiscated, ship seized; released at Algiers on 2 August
14 July	<i>Waipora</i>	British	Australia; searched and released
15 July	<i>Pr. Heinrich</i> (mail packet)	German	Various Chinese and Japanese ports; mail addressed to Japan confiscated, ship released (see endnote 24)
16 July	<i>Dalmatia</i>	British	Chinese ports; searched and released
17 July	<i>Persia</i> (mail packet)	British	Asian ports; searched and released
	<i>Woodcock</i>	British	Red Sea ports; searched and released
	<i>Ravn</i>	Norwegian	Unknown; searched and released
	<i>Scandia</i>	British	Yokohama; railroad tracks confiscated, ship seized; released at Suez on 25 July
	<i>Ardova</i>	British	Asian ports; ship and cargo, including U.S. War Dept. gunpowder for Philippines, seized; released at Suez on 25 July
24 July	<i>City of Madras</i>	British	Indian ports; searched and released
	<i>Formosa</i>	British	Asian ports; searched and released
	<i>City of Agra</i>	British	Indian ports; searched and released
21 Aug.	<i>Comedian</i>	British	East African ports; searched and released

by the 29th."<sup>31</sup> That meant that there was not enough time to refuel (each ship needed four or five days to do so) and then reach the safety of the Indian Ocean. Moreover, contract or no, Captain Meier of the *Holsatia* was not going to wait to be caught in the company of Russian raiders by a real (as opposed to auxiliary) Japanese cruiser; he was quite adamant about that. Therefore Skalsky gave the order to leave the Red Sea without refueling and begin the second phase of the operation. He instructed the German to meet him in Menai Bay, Zanzibar Island, in one month. The *Holsatia* then returned to Suez, arriving there on the 27th.<sup>32</sup> On that same day the two Russians passed Perim Island, and on 29 July they rounded Cape Guardafui into the open sea. Short of coal and obliged therefore to restrict his operations, Captain Skalsky, exercising the latitude afforded by his orders, signalled Captain Troyan of *Smolensk* to proceed with the commerce-raiding mission and then to meet him on 5 September at a point one hundred miles east of Zanzibar or, that failing, in Menai Bay.

The deployment of the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* had by now raised legal and political issues that would ultimately compel the Russian government to end the operation. The British and American governments were already deeply annoyed by St. Petersburg's indiscriminate definition of contraband.<sup>33</sup> The central issue, however, was whether Russia had violated the neutrality of the Turkish Straits by sending two disguised warships through them. The Russian naval ministry, of course, maintained that it had violated neither Turkish neutrality nor international law. Since 1883, when the Volunteer Fleet was transferred to naval control, its vessels transporting war material to the Far East had routinely raised the naval flag as soon as they had passed the Straits. That arrangement between Russia and Turkey was widely known and condoned by all powers, including Great Britain.<sup>34</sup>

Although the British Foreign Office and Admiralty had closely watched the situation developing in the Red Sea—where most of the traffic and thus most of the victims were British (see table 1)—the government moved cautiously. Prime Minister Alfred Balfour was genuinely interested in improving relations with Russia. That interest was shared by the French, Russia's ally and England's newest partner in international affairs, and it was reciprocated in St. Petersburg by the foreign minister, V.N. Lamsdorf. The British, moreover, had to take care lest they compromise their own long-term interests as mistress of the seas. Britannia, in British historian G.N. Clark's characterization, had historically suppressed, diverted, and controlled commerce "in every way that could be made harmful to her enemies and tolerable to the rest of the world."<sup>35</sup> Lord Balfour obviously had that in mind when he tried to calm irate shippers and also a Parliament that was demanding resolute action to protect British shipping from Russian "pirates." Remember, he warned, that today's belligerents would

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become tomorrow's neutrals and that international law imposed certain duties upon neutrals; England had "sternly enforced [those duties] when we have been in the position of a belligerent, and it would not become us to indulge in any attempt to minimize that obligation on neutrals."<sup>36</sup>

The *Peterburg's* seizure of the P&O steamer *Malacca* on 13 July, however, galvanized the British government to action. Included in the *Malacca's* cargo was a small piece of artillery and a large quantity of munitions consigned by the Admiralty to the British squadron at Hong Kong.<sup>37</sup> On 20 July the British ambassador, Sir Charles Hardinge, presented his government's formal protest to the Russian foreign minister. The British admitted that the status of the Volunteer Fleet cruisers was "ambiguous" and that it had been previously agreed "that ships of the Russian Volunteer fleet are not ships of war within the interpretation of the Xth Article of the Treaty of Paris of 1856." Nevertheless, London insisted, the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* could not have obtained permission to pass through the Straits without having convinced the Turkish authorities that they were commercial vessels and not ships of war. If they were warships, they had broken the law of Europe; if they were commissioned as warships after passing through the Straits, they had gravely compromised the status of the Volunteer Fleet.<sup>38</sup> In either case the cruiser activity in the Red Sea had "raised international questions of very high importance and of the utmost gravity."

On the presumption that the cruisers had been operating illegally from the start, the British government demanded the release of their prizes—the *Malacca*, *Ardova*, and *Scandia*. It also demanded assurances that cruiser operations would cease and that no other ships of the Volunteer Fleet subsequently allowed through the Turkish Straits would take up commerce raiding. As for the *Malacca*, the British foreign minister, Lord Lansdowne, noting that British naval stores could not be considered contraband, proposed to the Russian ambassador, Count Aleksandr Benckendorf, that the easiest solution would be for St. Petersburg "to recognize that a mistake had been made, and to release the 'Malacca' without further discussion."<sup>39</sup> At the same time, he advised Ambassador Hardinge in confidence that the government would "probably be obliged" to use force to prevent the Russians from taking the *Malacca* to a Russian port.<sup>40</sup>

When Nicholas II learned from his foreign minister, Lamsdorf, of Benckendorf's conversation with Lansdowne and of the British protest, he ordered a thorough inquiry into the seizure of the *Malacca* and the release of the vessel if it held no contraband. Lamsdorf, however, could not reach any naval authority with the power to execute the tsar's order, everyone having departed on the 21st for a conference at Libau.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, British efforts to detain the *Malacca* at Port Said failed, and on the morning of 21 July it set off for the Baltic in the hands of the Russian prize crew.

The British had already taken steps in Constantinople to ensure that the Turks would not allow it to enter the Dardanelles, and they also set two cruisers at the southern end of the Dardanelles. On 22 July the First Sea Lord, Lord Selbourne, ordered the commander of the Mediterranean Fleet to find the *Malacca*, then in fact westward-bound for a refueling at Algiers; if she was headed for the Baltic, ships at Malta and Gibraltar were to be ready to intercept it. The Admiralty cable continued: "It is hoped and believed that the Russian Government will agree that the vessels of their Volunteer fleet which have passed out of the Dardanelles, not as men-of-war, shall cease to search, molest, or capture any British vessels pending discussion as to [their] status. . . . If, however, the Russian Government should not take that view, His Majesty's Government is determined to prevent any more British vessels being searched, molested, or captured by those ships. You are, therefore, immediately to send such a force of His Majesty's cruisers and destroyers into the Red Sea as will suffice to insure complete security for British vessels. These cruisers and destroyers are to remain at Suez or some other convenient place to await further orders before taking any action."<sup>42</sup> In addition, a cruiser was to be stationed at Suez in order to intercept any British vessels taken as prizes by the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk*. At the same time, the British moved the entire Mediterranean Fleet—twelve battleships, two cruisers, two destroyers, and an admiral's yacht—from Malta to Alexandria. Its arrival was reported by the Russian consul in Alexandria on 23 July 1904.<sup>43</sup>

As the Royal Navy was preparing for action, the chiefs of the Russian Navy were meeting with Count Lamsdorf in St. Petersburg at the palace of the General Admiral. After a lengthy discussion on 23 July, the Grand Duke and his hawkish colleagues succumbed to Lamsdorf's voice of moderation. They concluded that it would be imprudent to continue the Red Sea operation and decided to call it off.<sup>44</sup> The formal statement issued immediately by the Foreign Ministry gave the explanation that the military status of the Volunteer Fleet was insufficiently grounded in international law. While insisting on its right to commission the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* as commerce raiders, Russia did acknowledge that its right was open to dispute. Therefore, in a spirit of conciliation, the government was revoking the cruisers' authorization to search and seize neutral shipping.<sup>45</sup>

The conciliatory attitude of the Russian government paved the way for the resolution of the affair. Admiral Avelan, the navy minister, ordered the immediate release of the *Ardova* and *Scandia*.<sup>46</sup> As for the *Malacca*, the two governments agreed that when the vessel stopped for coal at Algiers, the British consul would be invited aboard for a pro forma inspection of the cargo, after which he would formally declare that all munitions in question were the property of His Majesty's government; thereupon the ship would then be turned over to its owners. That

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aim was accomplished as planned on the second of August.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, there remained the task of bringing the cruisers to heel.

### The East Africa Coast, August 1904

After rounding the Horn of Africa, the Russian cruisers maintained separate southerly courses. *Peterburg*, low on coal, made a leisurely trip to Zanzibar, alternately steaming, sailing, and drifting. Skalsky crossed the Equator on 1 August but did not reach the vicinity of Zanzibar until the 15th. For the next two weeks he lingered in German waters just east of the channel between Mafia Island and the southern end of Zanzibar (see map 2). On 24 August he spotted the collier *Holsatia* coming out of Dar-es-Salaam. From the 25th until 1 September the two ships rode at anchor off Mafia's north cape, moving once to the south end of the island, where *Peterburg* completed the loading of 1,700 tons of coal.

Meanwhile, the *Smolensk*, well to the south, passed the Comoros Islands and on the night of 4–5 August entered the Mozambique Channel. It then ran past Port Elizabeth (in the British Cape Colony, on the southeast tip of Africa) to 36° south latitude, sailed eastward to 43° east longitude, and returned to the vicinity of Port Elizabeth. *Smolensk* maintained that pattern for nearly three weeks without sighting a ship. Finally on 21 August, while cruising northeast of Port Elizabeth near the mouth of the Bashee River, she encountered her first ship, the *Comedian*, a British coastal steamer, which was inspected and released. A week later, on 28 August, Troyan turned north and headed for his rendezvous with the *Peterburg*.

On 2 September, Captain Skalsky, his refueling completed, sent the *Holsatia* to Dar-es-Salaam to fetch water for the *Smolensk*. As *Holsatia* was departing, the German cutter *Ringani* arrived with a message from the governor of German East Africa: the *Peterburg*'s prolonged stay in German territory was compromising German neutrality; Skalsky would have to move his ship beyond the three-mile limit. He complied immediately and spent 3–5 September at sea waiting for the *Smolensk*. At 6:15 A.M. on 5 September, *Peterburg*'s wireless operator received a signal from *Smolensk*, northbound for Zanzibar; five hours later, *Peterburg*, with *Smolensk* in its wake, steamed into Menai Bay and dropped anchor.

### End of the Operation

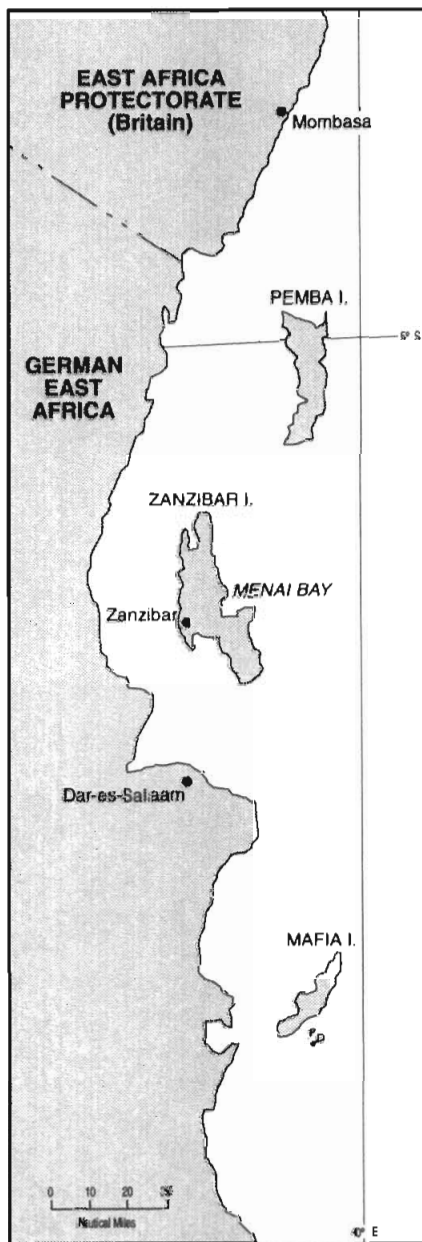
Having agreed to terminate the operations of the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk*, the Russian authorities faced the practical problem of how to do it. Admiral R.N. Viren, Chief of the Main Naval Staff, had publicly stated that it would take at least a month for new orders to reach the cruisers and had warned that new



incidents were to be expected.<sup>48</sup> A copy of Admiral Avelan's order of 21 July—CEASE CRUISER OPERATIONS; STOP NO ONE; PROCEED TO LIBAU—reached Suez just after the *Holsatia's* departure for its first rendezvous with the cruisers.<sup>49</sup> On 26 July the Russian minister in Cairo wired Lamsdorf that Avelan's order had been given to the captain of the German steamship *Gneisenau* in the hope that it would be stopped by one of the cruisers. On the following day, a second dispatch reported that the cruisers had left the Red Sea before being contacted, and on 28 July Admiral P.I. Ptashinsky, the Russian Naval Agent in Suez, confirmed the failure to relay Admiral Avelan's order.<sup>50</sup> On 4 August Lamsdorf officially informed the British government of the difficulty, promising that any further incidents would be regarded as never having occurred.<sup>51</sup> On 17 August the Navy made its last attempt to reach the cruisers "from one of our prearranged points."

Then came a news agency report of the *Smolensk's* arrest of the *Comedian*. On 24 August Admiral Avelan advised Lamsdorf that his messages had obviously not reached the cruisers and that he had exhausted his options. That being the case, the tsar ordered Lamsdorf to inquire of the British ambassador whether his government might "send a cruiser to contact our cruisers which, until the first of September, will be operating off the African coast. . . . Their

Map 2



East African Coast  
August 1904

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cruiser will be given a coded message ordering both of our ships to end their cruiser operations, to stop interfering with commercial vessels, and to return to Russia. This telegram will be encoded in the naval cipher so that the cruiser commanders will not think it is a trick."<sup>52</sup> The Navy, then, was not only to be frustrated; it was to be humiliated. The British agreed to undertake the mission, although the Admiralty in London doubted that the two British cruisers stationed in the area had the speed and range to catch the Russian ships.<sup>53</sup>

At 6:00 A.M. on 6 September, the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* had just weighed anchor in Menai Bay for Dar-es-Salaam to search for the *Holsatia* when the British cruiser *Forte* steamed into the bay flying the international signal "Have important message." Thus did Captains Skalsky and Troyan learn that they were to cease cruiser operations and return to Russia.<sup>54</sup> They moved their ships to Dar-es-Salaam, found the *Holsatia* there, and began refueling the *Smolensk*. At 6:00 P.M. on 8 September they put to sea for the return voyage to Russia. The *Peterburg* reached Libau on 10 November, *Smolensk* three days later.<sup>55</sup>

**T**he sortie of the auxiliary cruisers *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* into African waters was a skillfully planned and executed operation that temporarily succeeded in its objective. But it was not an isolated one. The Red Sea and Indian Ocean theater was only one of four in which the Russian Navy conducted operations in the Russo-Japanese War against commerce bound for Japan. In a coincident operation of July and August 1904, three auxiliary cruisers from the Baltic prowled the Atlantic off Gibraltar in search of contraband. Also, and until their destruction in August 1904, four regular naval cruisers based at Vladivostok ravaged shipping around the coasts of Japan itself. In May and June 1905, auxiliary cruisers that had accompanied the Second Pacific Squadron to the Far East and had been released just before the battle of Tsushima, preyed on commerce south and east of Japan. By all criteria, the Russian Navy's cruiser campaign was the application of a global strategy. It was an extraordinary undertaking, comparable to the remarkable voyage of the Second Pacific Squadron from Libau to Tsushima, for Russia had neither bases nor coaling stations to support those operations.

The cruiser war, moreover, was effective, if only for a short time. In August 1904 the three largest shipping firms in England, including the great P&O line, suspended service to Japan. By the end of August, insurance rates on British ships bound for the Far East stood at 20 shillings per hundred, or four times the rate charged the French and Germans. Prohibitive rates paralyzed American ports from Vancouver to San Francisco and sent shippers clamoring to Ottawa and Washington for relief. It would be foolhardy to suggest that Russia could have

defeated Japan with a greater effort by cruisers alone. Nevertheless, if the Russians had deployed and fought their capital ships with the imagination and skill that they displayed with their cruisers in enemy shipping lanes, the war at sea might have been something other than a litany of disaster.

## Notes

1. "The Japanese have learned from history and from the English, and from the latter just recently, not to feel bound to wait for a declaration of war before beginning military action." *Uchet komandovavshago Eskadroiu srediziemnago moria Kontr-Admirala Makarova a vremia prebyvaniia v Tikhom okeane v 1895 godu i soobrazhenie o vozmozhnykh voennykh deistviakh na Dal'nem vostok, 20 avr. 1896* (Report of Rear-Admiral Makarov, commander of the Mediterranean Squadron, on his arrival in the Pacific Ocean in 1895 and his views on the possibility of conflict in the Far East, 20 April 1896), Russian State Naval Archive (hereafter RGAVMF, formerly the Central State Naval Archive, TsGAVMF), *fond 763, op. 1, delo 40, list 4*.

The deterioration of Russo-Japanese relations since Japan's victory over China (1894–95), he warned, meant that Russia now faced "an enemy, more dangerous in the East than England."

One of Russia's greatest naval leaders and thinkers, Stepan Osipovich Makarov was lost with the battleship *Petrapavlousk* on 13 April 1904. His life and deeds are commemorated by a magnificent monument at Kronstadt and by his numerous writings, especially his controversial *Rassuzhdeniia po voprosam morskoi taktiki* (Treatise on questions of naval tactics) (St. Petersburg: 1916, reissued 1943). The general course of his career is recorded in two volumes of *Dokumenty*. He is the subject of several popular biographies, S.N. Semenov's *Makarov* (Moscow: 1988) being the latest. An excellent summary of his strategic and tactical thought can be found in V.A. Zolotarev and I.A. Kozlov, *Russko-iaponskaia voina 1904–1905 gg.: Bor'ba na more* (The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905: The struggle at sea) (Moscow: 1990), pp. 26–34. See also David R. Jones, "Admiral S.O. Makarov and Naval Theory," *Naval War College Review*, Winter 1994, especially pp. 69–75.

Before the calendar reform of 1918, Russia followed the Julian calendar, which in the twentieth century lagged the (Western) Gregorian calendar by thirteen days. All dates in this article in the old style have been converted to the modern system.

2. Russia's official record of the war was compiled under the auspices of the Naval General Staff by the Historical Commission for the Description of Naval Operations in the War of 1904–1905. It was published in two series: *Russko-iaponskaia voina 1904–1905 gg., Deistviia flota, Dokumenty* (The Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905, operations of the fleet, documents), 12 vols. (St. Petersburg: 1907–14); and *Russko-iaponskaia voina 1904–1905 gg.*, 7 vols. (St. Petersburg: 1912–1917). The first series (which is actually arranged by Sections, Parts, and Books rather than "volumes") sets forth the documentary record of correspondence, orders, and memoranda; the second is the official history. For a list of individual titles in the official naval history see John T. Greenwood, "Russian Official History in the Twentieth Century," Robin D.S. Higham, ed., *Official Histories: Essays and Bibliographies from around the World* (Manhattan: Kansas State Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 405–7.

No history of the Russo-Japanese War by an American or British author has made use of those Russian collections. Instead, all have relied on two British publications: Committee of Imperial Defence, Historical Section, *Official History, Military and Naval, of the Russo-Japanese War*, 3 vols., with 3 vols. of maps and appendices (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1919–20), a compilation drawn from official Russian and Japanese publications; and Admiralty War Staff, trans., *Japanese Official Naval History of the Russo-Japanese War*, 2 vols. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1913–14). Reviewing the latter in 1925, the German naval historian (and admiral) Alexander Meurer wrote that the Japanese naval history is "notable for its bias and must be used with great caution [because] secret operational plans and mistakes are carefully concealed. . . . Any historical use of the Japanese official history would be a grievous sin." Although there are French and German translations of the official Russian *military* history, the naval history remains untranslated. In short, all accounts of the war at sea written in English have depended on selected material, some of dubious merit, compiled by the British Admiralty.

The latest Russian history is Zolotarev and Kozlov's *Russko-iaponskaia voina 1904–1905 gg.: Bor'ba na more*. Zolotarev directs the Center for Military History (Moscow), while Kozlov is an experienced naval historian. Most of the book is based on the official history and other publications. Only the chapter on cruiser operations (probably Kozlov's work) utilizes unpublished archival material. Unfortunately, that segment contains some notable and puzzling errors, not least of which is a map that inaccurately identifies the Mozambique Channel as an operating area for Russian cruisers—an area that never entered into any plan or operation.

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Of the earlier Russian works on the war at sea, four are particularly worthy of mention, although only one mentions the role of the auxiliary cruisers. L.F. Dobrovorsky was a survivor of Tsushima; his *Urok morskoi voiny* (Lessons of the naval war) (Kronstadt: 1907) is essentially a tactical analysis. A.B. Nemits's *Ocherki morskikh operatsii rusko-iaponskoi voiny (lektsii v Nikolaevskoi morskoi akademii v 1911 g.)* [Sketches of naval operations in the Russo-Japanese War (Lectures at the Nikolaevsky Naval Academy in 1911)], published in a limited lithograph edition, presents a highly critical analysis of Russian strategy. That theme was taken up by P. Bykov, whose chapters on naval operations focus mainly on the Navy's failure to gain control of the sea—*Rusko-iaponskaia voyna 1904–1905 gg.* (Moscow: 1942). Bykov is the only writer before Zolotarev and Kozlov to consider the commerce raiders, but his brief sketch has many inaccuracies. Finally, E. Egorev's *Operatsii vladivostokskikh kreiserov* (The operations of the Vladivostok cruisers) (Moscow: 1939) is the only monograph on that subject and also an example of the outstanding historical craftsmanship that was occasionally possible in the Stalin era. The four Vladivostok-based cruisers operated mainly in the Sea of Japan, and Egorev does not address the operations of the auxiliary cruisers against oceanic commerce. Nevertheless, he thoroughly describes and analyzes Japan's coastal and international trade relations and its vulnerability to *guerre de course*.

3. Proponents of the *jeune école*, or "young school," contended that the 19th-century revolution in naval technology had made battleships obsolete because of vulnerability to torpedo boats and thus nullified the principle of command of the sea as well. Modern navies, they concluded, should be built around torpedo boats and cruisers. The *jeune école* is mainly identified with Admiral Théophile Aube, who as French Minister of Marine halted in 1886 the building of battleships and shifted his resources to the construction of light forces. One of the central points of Aube's doctrine was that England, which had grown dependent on colonies for its food and raw materials, could be defeated by destroying her commerce. That was the same conclusion reached by the Russians after the Crimean War.

See Theodore Ropp, *The Development of a Modern Navy: French Naval Policy, 1871–1904*, ed. Stephen S. Roberts (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), pp. 160–2; and Ropp, *War in the Modern World* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 190–1.

4. Long-range training cruises began during the reign of Aleksandr I (1801–25). In the first of numerous voyages of circumnavigation, I.F. Kruzenshtern and Yu F. Lisiansky set out from the Baltic in the *Nadezhda* and *Neva* in 1801. See I. Nozkov, *Russkie krugosvetnie moreplavately* (Russian voyages of circumnavigation), 2nd ed. (Moscow: 1947). For the development of post-Crimean naval policy see V.A. Zolotarev and I.A. Kozlov, *Flot gosudarstva rossiiskogo* (The fleet of the Russian state) (Moscow: 1992), esp. pp. 173–227; A.P. Shevryev, *Russkii Flot posle Krymskoi voiny: Liberal'naiia biurokratiia i morskii reformi* (The Russian fleet after the Crimean War: Liberal bureaucracy and naval reforms) (Moscow: 1990); P.A. Zaionchkovsky, *Voennye reformi v 50–60-x godakh v Rossii* (Russian military reforms in the 1850s and 1860s) (Moscow: 1952); A.J. Violette, "The Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich and the Reform of the Naval Administration, 1855–1870," *Slavonic and East European Review*, v. 52, 1974; and a series of articles by Jacob W. Kipp, including "Consequences of Defeat: Modernizing the Russian Navy, 1856–1863," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, v. 20, 1972, pp. 210–25; "Russian Naval Reformers and Imperial Expansion, 1856–1863," *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual*, v. 1, 1977, pp. 118–39; and "Tsarist Politics and the Naval Ministry, 1876–81: Balanced Fleet or Cruiser Navy?" *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, v. 17, 1983, pp. 151–79.

5. The rank and position of General Admiral, established by Peter the Great in 1796, identified the person who directed the entire naval establishment—fleet, admiralty, and ministry. In the Table of Ranks it was equivalent to General Field Marshal and State Chancellor. The position fell into disuse after the reign of Elizabeth (1740–62) but was restored in 1855. The last two General Admirals were the Grand Dukes Konstantin Nikolayevich (1855–81) and Aleksei Aleksandrovich (1881–1905).

6. According to Captain N.A. Zelen, who commanded the corvette *Almaz* in 1863, Admiral Lesovsky and his staff developed a detailed plan of attack on British shipping and colonies in the Atlantic. See "Russkii eskadron v Amerike v 1863 godu (vospominanie)" [The Russian squadron in America in 1862 (a memoir)], A.E. Nosa, ed., *Nachalo Dobrovol'nago flota: Materialy dlia istorii Russkago dobrovol'nago flota* (The origin of the Volunteer Fleet: Material for a history of the Russian Volunteer Fleet) (Moscow: 1890), pp. 83–9. See also, M.M. Malkin, *Grazhdanskaia voyna v SSHA i tsarskaia Rossia* (The Civil War in the United States and tsarist Russia) (Moscow: 1939); E.A. Adamov, "Russia and the United States at the Time of the Civil War," *Journal of Modern History*, v. 2, 1930, pp. 590–604; and Frank Golder, "Russian-American Relations during the Crimean War," *American Historical Review*, v. 31, 1926, pp. 462–77.

7. The saga of the Confederate raider *Alabama* resembled that of the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* inasmuch as her conversion to a raider also took place on the high seas, near Terceira Island in the Azores.

8. I. Ya. Butkovsky, "Tainstvennaia ekspeditsiia v Ameriku v 1878 g." (A Secret expedition to America in 1878), *Istoricheskie vestnik*, v. 11, 1883, pp. 602–3ff.; L.I. Strakhovsky, "Russia's Privateering Projects of 1878," *Journal of Modern History*, v. 7, 1935, pp. 22–40; and B.H. Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans, 1870–1880* (U.K.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1937), pp. 310, 472–3, 486.

9. See Kipp, "Tsarist Politics," and the biographical sketches of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich (1827–92) in the *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (Russian biographical dictionary) and *Dom romanovikh: Biograficheskie svydeniya o chlenakh tsarstvomavshego doma, ikh predkakh i rodstvennikakh* (The House of Romanov: Biographical information about members of the tsarist family, their ancestors and relatives), 2d ed. (St. Petersburg: 1992). Konstantin Nikolayevich, who as naval minister from 1855 to 1881 directed the post-Crimean modernization of the Navy, was blamed for the Navy's unpreparedness for the Balkan crisis and war of 1877–78, while his shift of emphasis from a cruiser-based to a balanced fleet antagonized many officers who were wedded to the *guerre de course*. In addition, Konstantin was detested for his liberal propensities by his nephews, the sons of his brother Aleksandr II (including the future Aleksandr III). A proponent of autocracy, he nevertheless believed that the crown needed to be strengthened by social and political reform, including the abolition of serfdom, limited representation in state institutions, freedom of assembly and press, etc., and accordingly he played a major role in legislating the Great Reforms of the 1860s and '70s. In order to encourage freer discussion of naval affairs, he ended the censorship of the naval journal *Morskoi sbornik*.

For the public subscription of funds, see M. Poggenpohl, *Otcherk vozniknoveniia i deiatel'nosti Dobrovol'nago Flota za vremia XXV-ti lietnago ego sushchestvovaniia* (Origins and operations of the Volunteer Fleet during its first twenty-five years) (St. Petersburg: 1903), pp. 1–43.

10. *Penza guberniia viedomosti*, 21 and 26 April 1878, quoted by Nosa, *Nachalo Dobrovol'nago flota*, pp. 50–1 and 55–6.

11. *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* (Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire), v. II, p. 54, no. 59605 (9 May 1879). For the transfer to the Naval Ministry, *ibid.*, v. III, p. 3, no. 1424 (14 March 1883).

12. At least one officer besides the captain was required to hold a naval commission, but it appears that in practice most if not all Volunteer Fleet officers were commissioned reservists.

The precedent for creating a volunteer fleet had been set in 1870 after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, when the Prussian government offered large bounties to shipowners who armed their vessels and successfully attacked French shipping. The crews, although subject to naval regulations, were civilians recruited by the shipowners. The officers were merchant seamen who were provided temporary naval commissions but had no official connection with the North German Navy, under whose flag they sailed. The Prussian volunteer fleet violated the spirit if not the letter of the Declaration of Paris (1856), which proclaimed that "privateering is and remains abolished." By general agreement, a privateer is a private vessel whose owner or captain has been commissioned by his government to seize enemy property upon the high seas and, by the judgment of a prize court, gain title to it. The United States was the only major maritime power not to adhere to the condemnation of privateering. *Hall's International Law*, 5th ed., quoted by James Brown Scott, *The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907* (Boston: 1908; reprint, New York: Garland, 1972), pp. 568–9 and 571.

The commissioning of the Volunteer Fleet cruisers during the Russo-Japanese War, described below, caused the conversion of merchant vessels into warships to be placed on the agenda of the Second Hague Peace Conference (1907), which in turn recognized the right of a state to convert merchant vessels into men-of-war.

13. Including twenty-six battleships, nine heavy and twenty-three light cruisers, twenty-eight gunboats, 132 torpedo boats, and five transports. L. G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armia i flot v XIX veke* (The Russian army and navy in the nineteenth century) (Moscow: 1973), pp. 517–8.

14. *Materialy o sostavlenii plana kreiserskoi voiny i voennykh deistvie v Tikhom okeane na sluchae voiny . . . 10 noiabr 1888 – 12 marta 1894* (Material concerning the development of a plan of cruiser war and military operations in the Pacific Ocean in the event of war . . . 10 November 1888 - 12 March 1894), RGAVMF, fond 417, op. 1, delo 429; especially Makarov's memorandum of 12 March 1891 on "The Organization of Cruiser War against England," pp. 65–72.

15. RGAVMF, fond 417, op. 1, delo 3160, list 83.; and delo 3108, 1–4. Also, Morskoe Ministerstvo, Glavnoe Admiralteistvo, *Otchet o vooruzhenii vspomogatel'nykh kreiserov i ikh kreiserskikh operatsiakh v russko-iaponskuiu voynu 1904–1905 gg.* (Report on the arming of auxiliary cruisers and their cruiser operations in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5) (St. Petersburg: 1907), pp. 1–4, 46–53, and 57 (hereafter *Otchet*). No more than five copies of this secret, 1,300-page report, which even includes the ciphers then in effect, were printed for exclusive use of the General Admiral and his inner circle; it has never before been cited, even in Russian studies on the war.

16. For details on the planning of cruiser operations in 1904, see the author's "Guerra de course in the Russo-Japanese War," in the forthcoming *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Eleventh Naval History Symposium* (1995).

17. *O vooruzhenii parakhodov Dobrovol'nago flota, 20 fevr. 1901 - 4 mart 1904 g.* (On the arming of the Volunteer Fleet steamships 20 February 1901 - 4 March 1904), RGAVMF, fond 417, op. 1, delo 2462. The Navy's authority to issue those orders was embodied in the charter of the Volunteer Fleet. The relation between the Navy and the Volunteer Fleet was redefined periodically to reflect current conditions. The regulations in

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effect in 1901 had last been revised by the Navy on 16 June 1897. The specific administrative "Statute governing the Volunteer Fleet steamers *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* as auxiliary naval vessels" was issued by the Naval Ministry on 29 April 1904. RGAVMF, *fond* 417, *op.* 1, *delo* 3108, *listi* 132-4.

18. In May 1904 the Naval Ministry informed the Committee of the Volunteer Fleet that five of its vessels—the *Voronezh*, *Vladimir*, *Kiev*, *Yaroslav*, and *Tambov*—would be activated and assigned to the Second Pacific Squadrons as transports, but the ships were never activated. See *ibid.*, *delo* 3108 and 3369.

19. *Saratov* spent the war in the Black Sea. In November 1905 she was converted to a prison ship to hold the *Potemkin* mutineers, and in July 1906 she transported them from Odessa to Kherson. *Ibid.*, *delo* 3546.

*Orel*, converted to a hospital ship, sailed from Odessa for the Baltic on 3 July 1904 and accompanied the Second Pacific Squadron to the Far East. She was captured in the Battle of Tsushima, sold to a private Japanese firm, and continued in commercial service as the *Kuzuko Maru*.

*Moskva*, commissioned as the naval transport *Angara*, was trapped at Port Arthur when the war broke out; she was decommissioned in February 1904 and remained there as a hospital ship. In August 1904 the *Kherson*, commissioned as the auxiliary cruiser *Lena*, was sent to the Pacific as a commerce raider, but her boilers gave out almost immediately; she limped across the Pacific and in September reached San Francisco, where she was interned for the war. Great Britain, Cab 37/71, 1904, no. 104, 2 (Public Records Office, Kew); *The Times* (London), 8 July 1904; V.V. Yarovoy, "Kratkii ocherk istorii Dobrovol'nago flota" (A short history of the Volunteer Fleet), *Gangut*, no. 3, 1992, pp. 78-9; and "Russian Auxiliary Cruisers in the Red Sea during 1904," *Warship International*, no. 2, 1972, pp. 203-4.

20. RGAVMF, *fond* 417, *op.* 1, *delo* 2462; Poggenpohl, *Ocherk*, pp. 147-58 and 162-4; and *Warship International*, no. 2, 1972, pp. 202-4. In the latter, the ships' details are accurate, but the account, which follows the British *Official History, Naval and Military, of the Russo-Japanese War*, is wrong on most key points.

21. Avelan's actual title was Director of the Naval Ministry, a post subordinate to the General Admiral. The holder of that position was, however, customarily referred to as the minister. Captain 2nd-rank is the equivalent of commander (in U.S. Navy terms, O-5).

For Admiral Avelan's orders, see *O kraiserskikh operatsiiskh vspomogatel'nykh kreiserov "Peterburg" i "Smolensk" v krasnom more i u vostochnykh beregov Afriki, 2 mart - 2 noiabr 1904 g.* ("Concerning cruiser operations of the auxiliary cruisers 'Peterburg' and 'Smolensk' in the Red Sea and along the East Coast of Africa, 2[15] March - 2[15] November 1904), RGAVMF, *fond* 417, *op.* 1, *delo* 3146, *listi* 6-11. (New style dates in brackets.)

The first plan developed for cruisers operating east of Suez had them in the western Arabian Sea and in the Indian Ocean, around Diego Garcia; they were moved to the Red Sea and the Cape of Good Hope at Admiral Rozhdestvensky's request.

22. The great powers neutralized the Dardanelles in the London Convention of 1841, which stipulated (Article I) that Turkey "will admit no foreign ship of war into the said Straits." The Treaty of Paris of 1856 (Article XI) neutralized the entire Black Sea: "Its waters and its ports, thrown open to the mercantile marine of every nation, are formally and in perpetuity interdicted to the flag of war." The Treaty of London of 1871 permitted the remilitarization of the Black Sea but maintained the neutrality of the Straits (Article II), and in 1878 the Congress of Berlin reaffirmed the status quo. The Russians did not regard the Ottoman Empire as a serious maritime threat. Thus, closing the Straits to alien warships was advantageous to Russia, because it gave the country's most vulnerable frontier the protection of international law.

23. Captain Skalsky selected Issa Bay on the Yemeni coast for the coaling site (see map 1). While the main body of Admiral Rozhdestvensky's Second Pacific Squadron followed the Cape route around Africa in November-December 1904, Admiral D. von Felkerzam's division of old battleships went by way of the Red Sea, as did Admiral N.I. Nebogatov's Third Squadron in April 1905. Lacking coaling stations or bases in the southern seas and prohibited by international law from remaining more than twenty-four hours in neutral ports, the Russian fleet had to refuel at anchorages in international waters or, during the 4,700-mile voyage across the Indian Ocean, at sea. Larger ships were refueled with coal transferred in barges from colliers; smaller vessels pulled alongside the colliers, which passed bagged coal over the ships' railings. Refueling took place every four or five days from colliers of the Hamburg-American Line—Hamburg-Amerikanische-Paketschiff-Aktien-Gesellschaft, or HAPAG—under contract to the Navy.

The Navy was forced to rely on foreign colliers because Russia was not a coal-exporting country and had no merchant fleet hull for the trade. The Navy, moreover, never having anticipated operations on the scale that it undertook in the Russo-Japanese War, had no colliers of its own. The Admiralty and Rozhdestvensky himself contracted with a number of foreign firms, mainly in French colonies, to supply coal, but only German shipping firms had the capacity to carry and deliver it. The German government, including the kaiser himself, was friendly toward Russia and favored its Asian expansion. Finally, Cardiff coal was the fuel of choice for all steamships, but, as Japan's ally, the British would not sell to the Russians. The Germans, however, were welcome. Later in the war, certain that British coal was being delivered to the Russian fleet, London attempted, unsuccessfully, to prevent the sale of coal destined for the Imperial Navy. See Lamar J.R. Cecil, "Coal for the Fleet That Had to Die," *American Historical Review*, v. 69, 1964, pp. 990-1005.

24. French mail packets were excepted because France was Russia's ally, German packets because Germany was cooperating diplomatically and by fueling the fleet. (Notwithstanding—and for reasons that remain unclear—on 15 July Captain Skalsky stopped and searched a German packet, the *Prince Heinrich*, and confiscated that portion of its mail addressed to Japan, in apparent contravention of his orders. See table 1.) In 1904 there was no international consensus concerning the status of mail. In 1907 the Second Hague Conference adopted a German proposal on the Protection of Postal Correspondence at Sea, which declared such material to be "inviolable, whatever its character, official or private, and whether it is the correspondence of neutrals or of belligerents." Russia, however, declined to subscribe to that declaration. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Proceedings of the Hague Peace Conferences: The Conference of 1907*, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1921), p. 1,155.

25. Such a long voyage was necessary because of the requirements of international law. The voyage to the Baltic would have been even longer except for a special convention adopted in 1888 that allowed belligerents to send prizes through the Suez Canal. Although international law allowed a prize to be taken to a neutral port and held there pending the decision of a prize court, it did not require that, and many states did not permit their ports to be so used. The United States, for example, denied its ports to prizes (and subsequently rejected Article 23 of the Hague Convention of 1907, which recommended the opposite) lest American ports be turned into bases for commerce raiders.

The Russo-Japanese War raised a number of legal issues of a modern character, which are treated in the following contemporary and subsequent works: C.J. Colombos, *A Treatise on the Law of Prize* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1926); William Edward Hall, *International Law*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924); Amos S. Hershey, *The International Law and Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: 1906); C.J.B. Hurst and F.B. Bray, *Russian and Japanese Prize Cases*, 2 vols. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1912–23; reprint, Buffalo: William S. Hein, 1972); F.E. Smith, *International Law as Interpreted during the Russo-Japanese War* (Boston: Boston Book Co., 1905); Sakuye Takahashi, *International Law Applied to the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Stevens, 1908); and U.S. Naval War College, *General Index to International Law Situations. Topics and Discussions*, vols. 1–10, 1901–1910 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1912).

Naval regulations and directives concerned with disposition of seized ships were identified in the *General Instructions for Cruiser Operations during the War with Japan with Respect to Questions of International Law*, namely: (1) the declaration of Russian war aims on 14 February 1904; (2) the regulations on contraband approved by the Admiralty's Order No. 42 of 28 February 1902; (3) the decree of 8 April 1904, which added cotton to the list of articles considered to be contraband of war; (4) the decree of 13 May 1904, concerning prisoners of war; (5) all other regulations and directives published after the cruisers had departed, if the commanders were convinced of the authenticity of those orders.

26. RGAVMF, *fond 417, op. 1, delo 3160, list 25.*

27. "Retung" was the telegraphic address of the Naval Ministry in St. Petersburg. (Its postal address was "Alexandrine Claude.") The cruisers' contact in Egypt was the newly appointed Naval Agent, Rear-Admiral P.I. Ptashinsky ("Suez: *Leliva*"). He arrived in Egypt in June to set up a network of agents and confidants in Cairo, Suez, and Port Said to relay information and instructions to the Red Sea cruisers. As further insurance of the secrecy of the operation, messages from St. Petersburg were generally taken by train by civilian courier to a telegraph agency in a Western European city. The cables were then routed to Egypt or the Red Sea through the German telegraph office in Dar-es-Salaam. *Otchet*, pp. 548–88ff.

28. RGAVMF, *fond 417, op. 1, delo 3160, listi 18–9.*

29. The following account of the operation is based on the reports submitted to the Naval Ministry by Captains Skalsky and Troyan in November 1904. There are no discrepancies between the two reports, which were written independently during the return voyage after the ships had parted company. RGAVMF, *fond 417, op. 1, delo 3146, listi 214–31* (Troyan) and 232–51 (Skalsky).

30. That misinformation originated in a Reuters News Agency report from Singapore on 16 July. The Naval Ministry transmitted the information to Admiral Ptashinsky in Suez on the 19th, and on the 21st it confirmed the accuracy of the report and ordered the cruisers to leave the Red Sea as soon as they had refueled. (*Otchet*, pp. 615, 618). Those instructions were relayed to the captain of the *Holsatia* as he departed for his rendezvous with the cruisers. No Japanese warship appeared in African waters during the cruise of the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk*.

31. RGAVMF, *fond 417, op. 1, delo 3146, list 242 ob* (i.e., reverse). In Captain Troyan's account (*list 220*), "the cruiser had to be at Perim on July 28."

32. *The Times* (London), 28 July 1904. Under the mistaken assumption that the *Holsatia* was under a prize crew, the *Times* correspondent reported that it had been "released immediately." *The Times* for July–September 1904 is interesting for what the public did not know about the Russian operation. Misapprehension as to *Holsatia's* status and role in the enterprise lent some support to London's contention that the Russians were discriminating against British shipping. The error was repeated in the British *Official History, Naval and Military, of the Russo-Japanese War* (see above, n. 2).

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When the *Holsatia* reached Snez, Captain Meier was ordered to deliver his coal to the auxiliary cruiser *Don*, then about to begin cruiser operations in the Atlantic. However, when news of the Japanese cruiser proved false, he was turned around at Algiers and eventually made his rendezvous with the *Peterburg* and *Smolensk* at Zanzibar. *Ochet*, v. 33, pp. 646-9.

33. The decree of 14 February 1904, issued in the name of the tsar, defined as contraband "every kind of fuel, such as coal, naphtha, alcohol, and other similar materials." It also included, "generally, everything intended for warfare by sea or land, as well as rice, provisions, and horses, beasts of burden, and others which may be used for warlike purposes, if they are transported on the account of, or are destined for, the enemy." The British and American governments objected to both the content and imprecision of the decree and especially to its failure to recognize the classification of contraband that had gained wide acceptance in the nineteenth century. That system, first proposed by the Dutch legal scholar Hugo Grotius in the seventeenth century, defined contraband according to purpose and destination. "Absolute contraband" consisted of those things primarily and usually put to military use in time of war—guns, ammunition, and the like. "Conditional contraband" consisted of articles that could be used for war (or peace) according to circumstances—horses, provisions, wire, timber, leather (for accouterments), rails and sleepers (cross-ties), carts and wagons, any tools or equipment used in mining, construction, metallurgy, or the fabrication of metals, etc. Articles of the first class destined for enemy ports or places occupied by the enemy were always contraband of war; articles of the second class could be contraband if destined for the enemy's military or naval forces. Some theorists and jurists asserted a third category—things that were *never* contraband. London and Washington objected particularly to the inclusion of cotton and rice shipped to ports in Japan. Secretary of State John Hay considered the issues of contraband and commerce raiders serious enough to interrupt his vacation and return to Washington. The subject is too large for this paper, however, and requires separate treatment.

34. *The Times* (London), 25 July 1904. That the British government recognized the practice is confirmed by Foreign Minister Lansdowne's 5 July query to his ambassador to Turkey concerning the *Peterburg*: "Was special permit granted by the Porte, following usual practice by Volunteer fleet?"; and by Sir N. O'Connor's reply, that having "declared they had war material on board, a special permit to pass the Straits was applied for and granted in the usual way." Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Telegrams relating to the Action of Vessels belonging to the Russian Volunteer Fleet from July 3 to July 23, 1904*, Cab 37/71, (1904): 104: no. 4 (hereafter F.O. Telegrams).

35. G.N. Clark, *The Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: 1947), p. 24.

36. *The Times* (London), 29 July 1904.

37. The *Malacca* was seized on the morning of 13 July 1904 near the island of Zukur. Its 3,000 tons of cargo included the ironwork for a crane in the dockyards at Moji, Japan. Forty tons of explosives in the holds were presumably bound for the British navy at Hong Kong. According to Captain Skalsky, the *Malacca* initially ignored the signal to "Stop engines" and tried to outrun the *Peterburg*. Captain Street of the *Malacca* then refused to show his papers—a violation of maritime law. A prize crew of thirty took the ship to Suez after first transferring her passengers to the outward-bound steamer *Marmora*.

Russian and British documents and correspondence on the *Malacca* are as follows: "The Arrest of the British Steamers *Malacca*, *Ardeva*, and *Scandia* by the Auxiliary Cruisers *Peterburg* and *Smolensk*, 5 July 1904 - 30 July 1905" and "Protocol on the Arrest of the *Malacca* by the Auxiliary Cruisers *Peterburg* and *Smolensk*, 1904"; RGAVMF, *fond 417*, *op. 1*, *dela 3159* and *3167*; F.O. Telegrams, nos. 20-1, 23-5, 28-35, 37-50, 52-73, 77, 80, and 93; and the *Malacca's* log for 13-19 July 1904, in *The Times* (London), 26 August 1904.

38. The terms were not used but the implication was that the deferred commissioning of transports as cruisers was tantamount to the issue of letters of marque or the commissioning of privateers, both of which were outlawed by the Declaration of Paris of 1856.

On 21 July 1904, A.A. Neratov, a constant source of misinformation in the Russian Foreign Ministry, lied to the press when he declared that the two cruisers had received their commissions as naval vessels from the Russian consul at Suez. F.O. Telegrams, no. 60.

39. The British Note in Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne (no. 37), 20 July 1904, Cab 37/71, 1904, no. 103, Inclosure. The British position, however, is more clearly expressed in Lansdowne's report to Hardinge of his conversation with Count Benckendorf on 19 July: Cab 37/71, 1904, no. 102. For a detailed account of this episode from the British side, see Keith Neilson, "A Dangerous Game of American Poker: The Russo-Japanese War and British Policy," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, v. 12, 1989, pp. 63-87. See also B.J.C. McKercher, "Diplomatic equipose: The Lansdowne Foreign Office, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, and the global balance of power," *Canadian Journal of History*, December 1989, pp. 299-399.

40. F.O. Telegrams, no. 35.

41. Hardinge to Lansdowne, 20 and 21 July 1904, F.O. Telegrams, nos. 47 and 49.

42. F.O. Telegrams, no. 62.

43. RGAVMF, *fond 417*, *op. 1*, *dela 3146*, *listi 84* and *86*.

44. Journal of the conference of 23 July 1904, in *Ochet*, pp. 539-76.



45. Hardinge to Lansdowne, 23 July 1904, F.O. Telegrams, no. 79; *The Times* (London), 25 July 1904.

46. Avelan to Leliva, Suez [Ptashinsky], 23 July 1904: "Inform commander of prize SCANDIA to lower flag after sundown. Officers and crew to go ashore, crate their weapons, and return to Sevastopol at first opportunity. SCANDIA is released. Same for ARDOVA." *Otchet*, p. 625.

47. The prize crew of the *Malacca* was commanded by Midshipman Schwartz, who submitted to the Historical Commission on the Russo-Japanese War a formal deposition of his eventful journey from the Red Sea to Algiers. Upon leaving the ship, the English crew had sabotaged the engine so that it broke down shortly after leaving Port Said; the voyage to Algiers was then made in the company of two British cruisers. "Pokazanie Vakhennago Nachal'nika Leutenanta fon-Shvartz," pp. 122-33, in *Russko-iaponskaia voina, 1904-1905 gg., Deistviia flota, Dokumenty; Otdel' IV: 2-ia Tikhookeanskaia eskadra, Kniga tretia: Boi 14-15 maia 1905 goda, Vypusk 5-i: Pokazaniia v Sliedstvennoi Komissii* (Deposition of Watch Officer von Schwartz, in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, operations of the fleet documents; Section IV: The Second Pacific Squadron, Book 3: The battle of 14-15 May 1905 [i.e., Tsubima, 27-28 May], Number 5: Depositions to the investigating commission) (Petrograd: 1914), esp. 131-3.

48. *The Times* (London), 20 July 1904, reporting an interview by the correspondent of *Le Matin* (Paris).

49. RGAVMF, *fond* 417, *op.* 1, *delo* 3146, *list* 151. A similar message was sent simultaneously to the Russians' agent in Hodeida. *Otchet*, p. 641.

50. *Otchet*, pp. 644, 646, 648.

51. F.O. Telegrams, nos. 67 and 83.

52. RGAVMF, *fond* 417, *op.* 1, *delo* 3146, *list* 159.

53. Great Britain, Committee on Imperial Defense, "Minutes of the 55th Meeting, August 25, 1904," *Cah* 38/6, 1904, no. 90.

54. In an otherwise detailed account, Zolotarev and Kozlov chose not to describe or explain how Avelan's order was delivered. They noted only that Skalsky "was given" (*byla peredana*) a telegram from Avelan ordering him to return to Libau. *Russko-iaponskaia voina*, p. 139.

55. On 25 October 1904, while still at sea, *Smolensk* and *Peterburg* were transferred to the regular navy and recommissioned as the *Rion* and *Dnepr*. They then accompanied Rozhdestvensky's Second Pacific Squadron to the Far East, where in May and June 1905 they again took up commerce raiding.

On 12 August 1905, after returning to Libau, *Dnepr* was decommissioned and restored to the Volunteer Fleet as *Peterburg*. In 1913 she served as a hospital ship in the Adriatic during the Second Balkan War. She was reactivated by the Navy in December 1914 as the *Don* and used as a transport in the Great War. In the wake of the Russian Civil War, White Russian refugees fled in her to Bizerte in December 1920; she was sold there in May 1921 and scrapped in Italy in 1922. *Smolensk* also returned to the Volunteer Fleet in August 1905. The Navy reacquired her in 1913 as the training ship *Rion*. In November 1920, during the Russian Civil War, she was sailed by Whites to Corsica, sold, and scrapped at Toulon in 1922. In November 1905 the Navy commended and decorated Captain Skalsky for his service in the war. *Warship International*, no. 2, 1962, pp. 202-3.

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