Russian Military Intelligence in the War with Japan, 1904–05

Secret operations on land and at sea

Evgeny Sergeev

Routledge Studies in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe

Russian Military Intelligence in the War with Japan, 1904–05

This book examines Russian military intelligence in the war with Japan of 1904–5. Based on newly accessible documents from the tsarist era military, naval and diplomatic archives, it gives an overview of the origins, structure and performance of Russian military intelligence in the Far East at the start of the twentieth century, investigating developments in strategic and tactical military espionage, as well as combat reconnaissance. It provides a comprehensive reappraisal of the role of military intelligence in the years immediately preceding the First World War, by comparing the Russian military secret services to those of the other great powers, including Britain, Germany, France and Japan.

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To my wife Irina and our sons Dennis and Oleg

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Preface

During the week of 7–11 August 2000, a group of scholars held a seminar at the Renvall Institute of Helsinki University to exchange ideas and conceptual approaches to a new history of the Russo-Japanese War. They decided to write an edited collection of essays to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the events that had taken place in Manchuria in 1904–5. Their aim was to reinterpret and better place the significance of the conflict in the history of the twentieth century.

In the summer of 2001, Professor David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye addressed to me with a suggestion to join the team of contributors to the project 'The Russo-Japanese War: A Centennial Reappraisal'. Given the fact that some of my previous studies focused upon military intelligence of late imperial Russia, I was requested by the project's organizing body to write an essay on the history of Russian intelligence in the hostilities of 1904–5.

Obsessed with the idea of a fresh, unbiased research of the role that military intelligence (MI) had played in the Manchurian campaign, I soon realized the paucity of studies on this particular subject. While Russian MI progress in time of war has been so far underestimated, some very important issues of the intelligence process, both on the front and in the rear, still need a thorough analysis.

Seeing that the modern historiography, especially in the English-speaking countries, lacks such a comprehensive study, I decided not to limit myself to a brief contribution to the project but to write a treatise which would tackle less examined or simply little known episodes of secret operations in the course of the war.

Thus, the book came to be written as a result of intensive research in archives and libraries in Russia, the USA and the UK. It aims primarily at filling the major gap in the history of the most powerful military secret service, though at an early stage of its existence.

Acknowledgements

To try to study the history of Russian military intelligence in the crucial period of the Far Eastern Crisis has called for a great amount of work with archival records, published collections of documents and extensive bibliography, though not particularly on the subject but nevertheless referring to the theme. This undertaking has been made easier by the sympathy of many people whose aid was of great importance to me. I am therefore very grateful to all colleagues who provided much advice in conducting this research. I especially wish to thank Artiom Ulunian and Igor Karpeev for reading and commenting on draft chapters. I would like to warmly thank David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce Menning who shared their knowledge of modern bibliography on the history of the Far East and the reforms in the Russian army in the late imperial period and whose criticism helped me on every step of the way.

The study would not have been accomplished without the support of the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. During my visit to this centre of Russian studies, the research was conducted at the Library of the Kennan Institute, at the Library of Congress and at the National Archives of the USA. It was greatly facilitated by the staff of these world-renowned establishments. I wish to address my sincere gratitude to Blair Ruble, the Director of the Kennan Institute.

At the final stage of my work, I was supported by a grant from the British Academy and the University of London Institute of Historical Research. I would like to thank the staff of the Institute, and in particular, David Bates and Samantha Jordan. Thanks also to Francine Danaher at the British Academy Department of International Relations for the kindly assistance in the organization of the visiting research fellowship.

I am pleased to acknowledge the courtesy of Brill Academic Publishers for the granted permission of re-using some maps from their publication *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective* (John Steinberg *et al.*, eds, Boston and Leiden, 2005).

I am grateful to Peter Sowden and Tom Bates for skilfully guiding me through the publication process.

I am especially in debt to my wife Irina Sergeeva and our children, Dennis and Oleg, whose constant support and immense patience made it all possible.

Selected chronology

1904

5 February	Admiral Togo receives the Imperial war order
6 February	Japan breaks diplomatic relations with Russia
8 February	A Japanese squadron enters Chemulpo (Inchon) harbour, Japanese troops land at Chemulpo in Korea
8 February	A Japanese destroyer squadron leaves the main fleet and makes for Port Arthur, a surprise Japanese torpedo attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur damages two battleships and a cruiser
9 February	Japanese troops occupy Seoul
9 February	Russia declares war on Japan
6 March	The Japanese fleet shells Vladivostok
23 March	The first contacts between the Japanese First Army and advanced Cossack patrols in northern Korea
28 March	Kuropatkin arrives in Liaoyang and assumes command of Russian forces in Manchuria
13 April	The Russian battleship *Petropavlovsk* strikes a mine, explodes, and sinks with most hands: Admiral Makarov is killed; the Russian fleet is profoundly demoralized
30 April	The Battle of the Yalu
10 May	The last trains escape from Port Arthur, the fortress is cut off
25–26 May	The Battle of Nanshan
14–15 June	The Battle of Te-li-ssu: a premature Russian relief expedition is routed eighty miles north of Port Arthur
20 June	Imperial Naval Conference: Russia decides to send its Baltic Fleet around the world to the Far East
10 August	The Battle of the Yellow Sea; Togo repels a final escape attempt by the Port Arthur fleet; Russian Admiral Vitgeft is killed
26 August–4 September	The Battle of Liaoyang

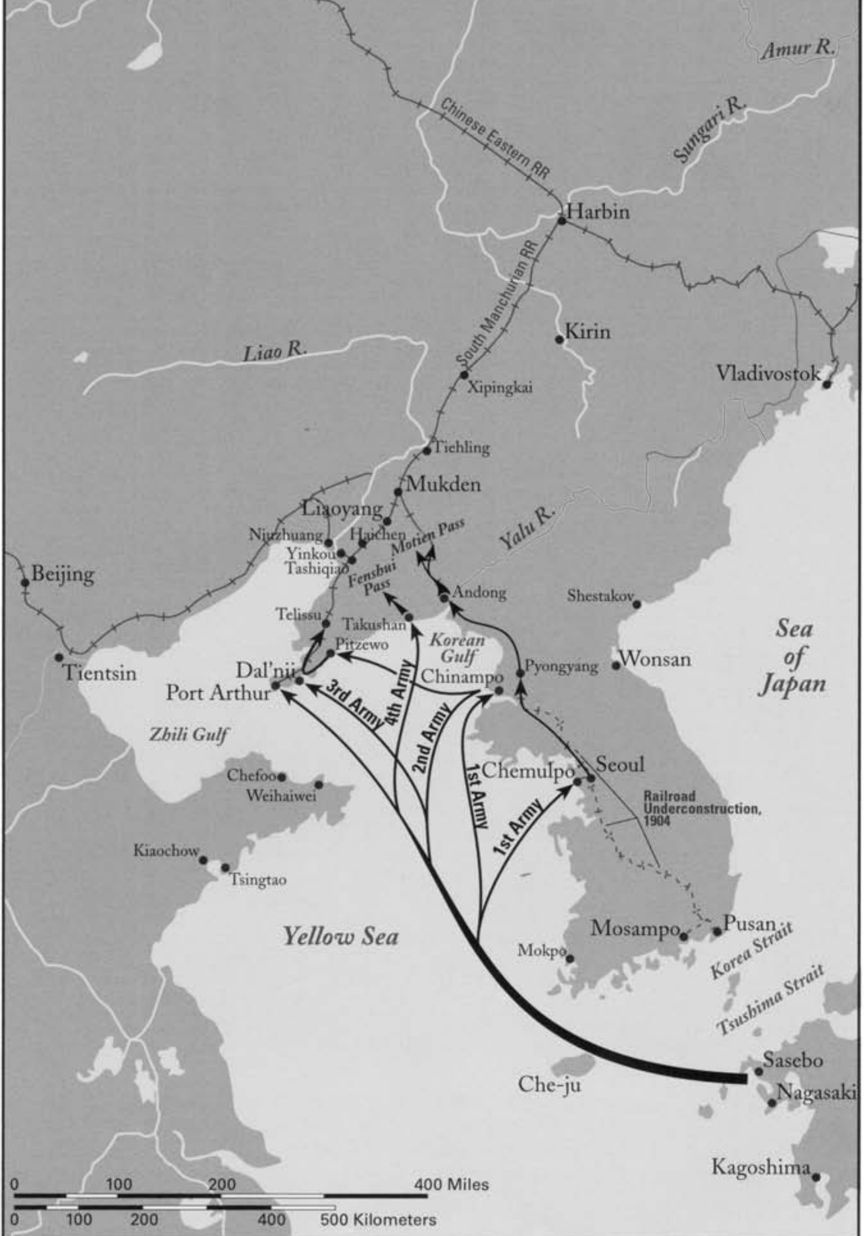
5–17 October	The Battle of Shaho
15 October	The Russian Baltic Fleet sails off to the Far East from Libau
22 October	The Dogger Bank Incident

1905

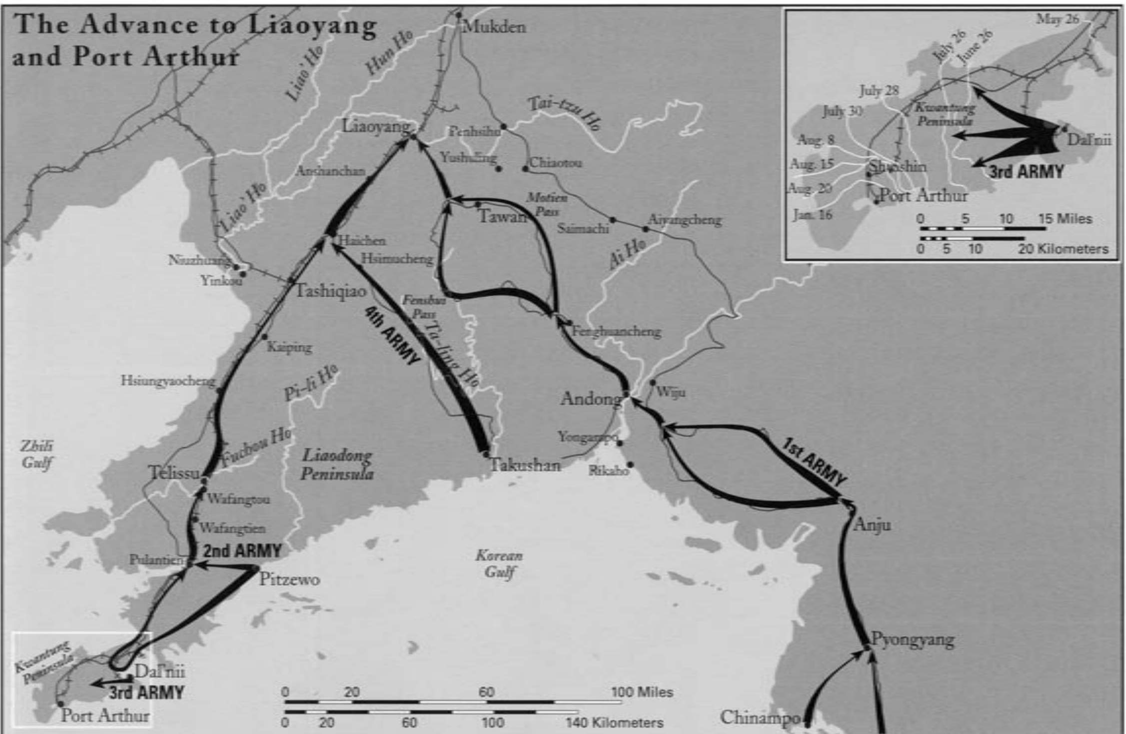
2 January	Port Arthur formally surrenders
25–27 January	The Battle of Sandepu
22 February–10 March	The grand Battle of Mukden
27–28 May	The grand naval battle of Tsushima
9 August–5 September	Japanese–Russian peace talks at Portsmouth in Virginia, USA
5 September	The Treaty of Portsmouth ends the Russo-Japanese War

Abbreviations

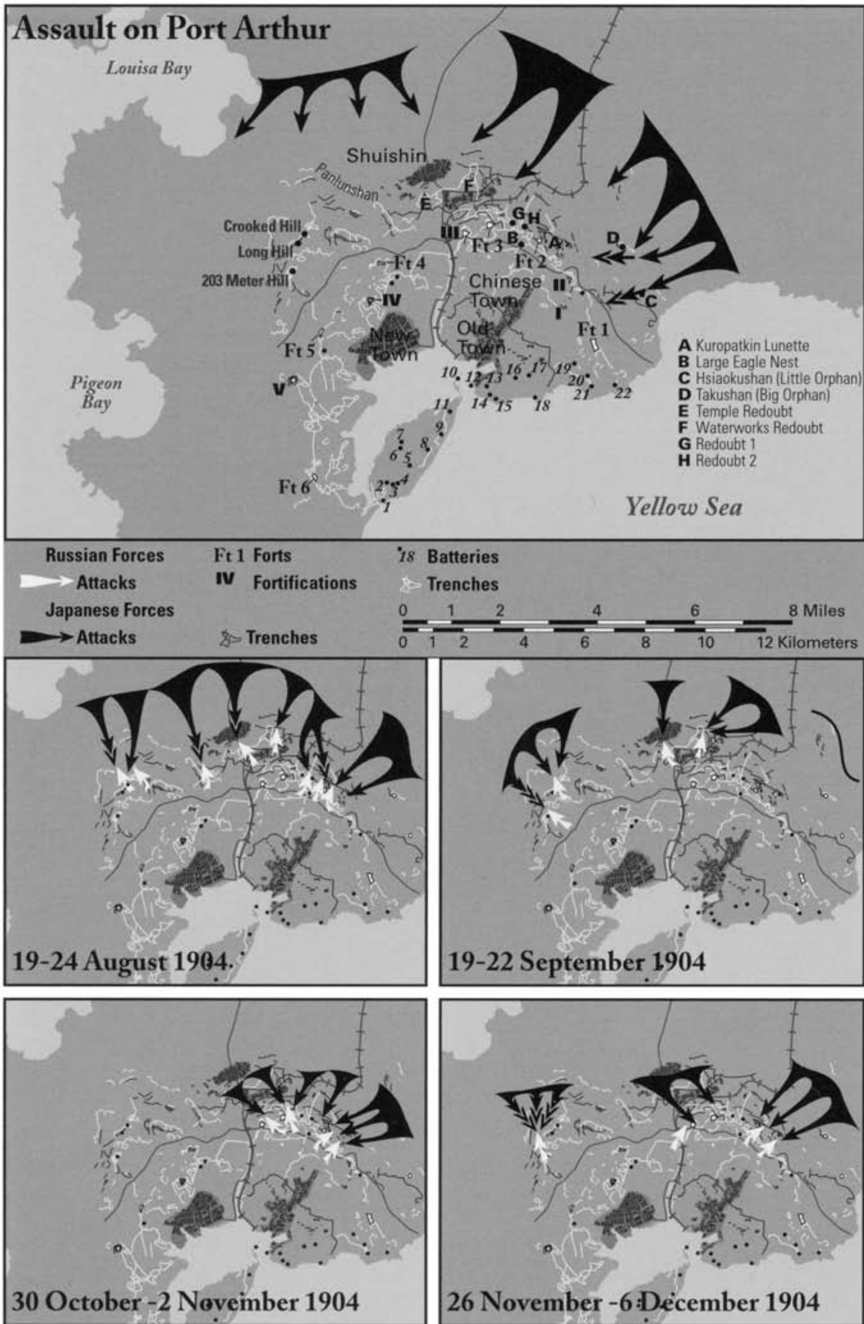
CER	Chinese Eastern Railway
HUMINT	human intelligence
MCGINT	mapping, charting and geodesy intelligence
SIGINT	signal intelligence
SMR	Southern Manchurian Railway
TECHINT	technical intelligence



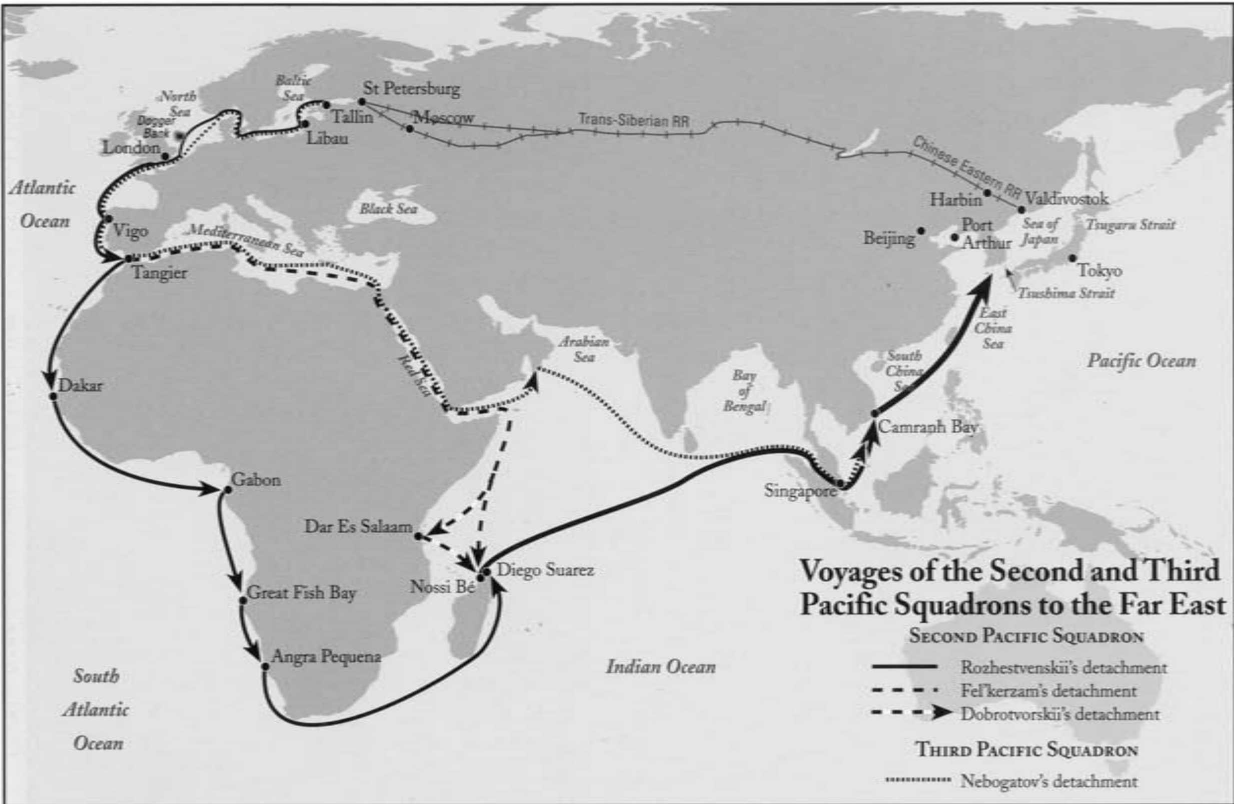
Map 1 Far Eastern theatre of war, with initial Japanese lines of operation.



Map 2 The advance to Liaoyang and Port Arthur.



Map 3 Assault on Port Arthur.



Map 4 Voyages of the Second and Third Pacific Squadrons to the Far East.

Introduction

Intelligence is the soul of all public business

Daniel Defoe, 1704

All the wars and military conflicts in modern and contemporary history fall under several headings. There were those brief skirmishes at the outposts of colonial empires in which metropolitan armies re-established order, rebuffing attacks from savage tribes and substituting civilized rule for them. A grade higher may be reached by copious full-scale campaigns of momentary importance which seemed to lead to minor geopolitical transformations. And the most significant place must be reserved for the wars whose political, economic and cultural issues had been so immense as to be remembered next generations.

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 was without doubt one such landmark. It represented an absolutely new type of war waged by two conscript armies equipped with the latest military technologies. It has gone down in history as a regional confrontation with substantial global repercussions. Suffice to say that Japan's military victory over Russia greatly encouraged Indian, Egyptian and Southeast Asian nationalism, for the myth of European invincibility was thereby destroyed. And, what seems more important, it developed into the century's first conflict between maritime and continental empires in a mortal combat for the mastery of the Far East.

It is not surprising, therefore, that scholars consider the Russo-Japanese conflict as World War Zero,[1] for there had been no earlier large-scale battles which can compare with those in Manchuria, first, in the number of troops engaged under one supreme command and inspired with a firm resolution to win or die, second, in the duration of operations and in length of front, and third, in novel military technologies sanctioned during the course of war.

In discussion on the origins of the conflict, there should be noted above all the strong desire of late imperial Russia to establish a stronghold in the Pacific, which ran counter to the interests of the new player on the global chessboard – the Japanese Empire, which was in the process of territorial expansion at the cost of neighbouring continental states. On the one hand, St Petersburg fostered plans to colonize Far Eastern territories in Mongolia, Manchuria and Korea, but

on the other hand, Tokyo was disinclined to yield initiative to the Russians and strove for geopolitical domination in Asia, the initial step being the establishment of a bridgehead in Korea and Manchuria.[2]

The outbreak of hostilities was triggered by Tokyo's apprehensions of the tsar's intentions to deploy Russian troops in Manchuria on a permanent basis. The last Romanov on the Russian throne was obsessed with the *idée fixe* of raising state prestige in foreign affairs while simultaneously reducing tension inside the empire. Hence, Nicholas II strove for 'a short victorious war' against an ostensibly weak opponent in the Far East who challenged his plans – namely Mutsuhito (Meidzi), the industrious Emperor of the Chrysanthemum Dynasty, who needed a war triumph to vie with Russia over contending spheres of influence and upgrade the Japanese position at the regional level as well as to join the 'global concert'.

For these and other reasons, perception of war in the two belligerent states differed greatly. While a vast majority of tsarist subjects regarded it as a local clash of lesser intensity than in Europe, similar to the campaign against the Boxer insurgents in 1900–1, their counterparts in the Land of the Rising Sun strongly believed that victory over the mighty, sinister 'Russian Bear' would be a vital necessity to survive in the epoch of imperialism.

High moral standards, national consolidation and protracted military training together with a favourable geographical position and diplomatic support from the UK and the USA – all these prerequisites of a final success in the war seemed indisputable to the Japanese military circles. The problem was in crushing the tsarist army and navy in the shortest period in two or three decisive battles before incremental reinforcements arrived from European Russia to the front. The Japanese needed, therefore, full information on Russia's war preparedness and possible efforts to augment it. The same was true for St Petersburg, whose determination to wage a war of exhaustion with Japan stimulated gathering data of its potential and objectives on the eve and during hostilities.

Military intelligence (MI) has accompanied wars from time immemorial. Any commander has always been in strong need both to obtain information on the adversary and to hide his own potential and intentions from his opponent. The Russo-Japanese War was not an exception. The belligerents were put into a dilemma, where the intelligence services needed to be more accurate in the calculation of the other side's capabilities and more effective in the frustration of its plots on land and sea. It should be particularly emphasized that, besides their importance for the Russo-Japanese War itself, intelligence operations during the conflict proved to be the last significant episode of the so-called 'Great Game', i.e. the clandestine struggle between powers for domination in East Asia.

Because spying is fundamentally a service required by decision makers and because of the paucity of studies on the establishment of secret institutions during the reign of Nicholas II, the subject of the book is Russian military intelligence (MI); however, it is studied in comparison with the Japanese and European intelligence communities.

As a prelude to further context, a few caveats regarding the intelligence lexicon are in order. Because the Russian noun *razvedka* sometimes does not

correspond exactly to the English notion *intelligence*, and connotes additional meanings, it needs to be defined accurately. Its lexical origins can be traced in the Russian verb *vedat'* – i.e. to know, to get information about something or somebody. Consequential denotations indicated such verbs as to look around, to overview, to search for something or somebody, and later, to make an exploratory survey. The derivatives of the verb *vedat'* include various nouns: *razvedka, razvedchik, razvedyvanie.*[3] Thus, various English expressions for seeking out information about an enemy – to spy, to reconnoitre, to snoop – can be interpreted with the use of a single Russian equivalent – *razvedka.*

This meaning was fixed for the first time in the Russian dictionaries of 1847 and 1862. However, a more comprehensive interpretation in 1899 edition of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* by Brockhaus and Efron ran as follows:

> *Razvedka* – i.e. collection of information about adversary, his war potential, means, intentions, preparedness. It is conducted not only in wartime but in periods of peace as well. While in periods of peace, *razvedka* aims at a possible exact acquaintance with neighbour-states, their armed forces and means of logistic, especially in the frontier zone, with premeditated defence systems, mobilization schedules, etc. To these ends, they utilize topographic maps and statistical data compiled by overt and secret military agents . . . In wartime, the means of *razvedka* are more diversified and embrace spies, scouts recruited from local population, deserters and defectors, prisoners-of-war, and, finally, reconnaissance trips made by mounted patrols . . . Scouts for patrolling are selected from the smartest and promptest cavalrymen who have been drilled for their mission before hostilities.[4]

Putting it another way, *razvedka*, or military intelligence, was reduced to espionage, i.e. making reconnaissance by secret agents (HUMINT). Though some modern authors prefer to distinguish one definition from another, arguing that 'while intelligence is a backroom job, espionage is a practical, front-line work',[5] such was a classical conception of intelligence function at the start of the twentieth century. As one eminent Russian military expert defined it in 1907, military espionage indicated the 'collection of information about armed forces and strongholds of other states together with geographical, topographical and statistical data of military importance, not excluding strategic routes and communications'.[6]

However, the Russo-Japanese War greatly enriched MI sources and methods. Technical intelligence (TECHINT), which deals with data collection through electronic means (signals and photographs), mapping, charting and geodesic intelligence (MCGINT), which is used in the preparation of targeting information at all levels, and finally, open-source data gathering, which amounted to 80 per cent of all intelligence, were successfully innovated by opponent secret services. Hence, it is not correct to believe, like some authors do, that it was not until the First World War had been going on for some time when the Entente and the Central powers began to realize the importance of enemy newspapers as

an intelligence source,[7] or that signal intelligence (SIGINT) started with the interception of the notorious Zimmerman telegram by the British secret service in 1917.[8]

Likewise, it should be mentioned that staff activities on the Manchurian front spawned a comprehensive intelligence cycle, i.e. a five-step process by which 'raw' information is converted into useful data. It embraced *planning*, *collection*, *processing*, *production* and *dissemination* of valuable nuggets of intelligence during the course of hostilities as well as in peacetime.[9]

While planning and direction requires a lucid definition of aims by higher command, collection units gather, screen and format information to deliver it to a processing agency. Here all the collected data are converted into some sort of intelligence production, which is then assessed in the light of sources' validity and information accuracy. Thus, a complete mosaic is being composed by an analyst who is also charged with the formulation of a completed intelligence product. The last step was intelligence dissemination in the appropriate oral, written or graphic form serving the need of a customer, the latter bearing in mind that intelligence services can only give advice, pointing out the possible consequences of alternative courses, whereas the final decision must be taken by the executive.[10]

Because MI runs through all command echelons and the entire conflict spectrum, it has different levels and sides. In coherence with war logic, the present study attributes *strategic intelligence* to planning and data processing at the broadest, i.e. global or continental levels, whereas *operational intelligence* serves collection and analysis within the Far Eastern theatre of war or on the Manchurian front as a whole and *tactical intelligence*, or putting it another way, *combat reconnaissance*, centres upon scheduling conduct of battles (such as these of Liaoyang, Shaho, Mukden) or forays (such as made by Russian Cossacks against Inkow or Fakumyn).

According to the classification in the *International Military and Defense Encyclopedia*, an offensive side of MI is to be differentiated from a defensive one, usually called counter-intelligence. The latter refers to activities undertaken and data analysed to protect one's army or navy against actions committed by hostile secret services.[11] In the case of the Russo-Japanese War, counter-espionage as a subject of special interest has been explored in a number of recent treatises.[12] Hence, this book is dealing primarily with the offensive side of Russian MI while definitely not neglecting episodes of counter-intelligence in connection with covert operations.

It should be stressed that the book pioneers the inspection of naval intelligence which remains understudied, albeit that the Russo-Japanese War alerted the great powers to the vital and new role it performed. Despite the fact that some material on this particular realm of MI has been published recently in Russia and abroad, it has focused on the strategic level while ignoring operational and tactical spying conducted by the First Pacific Squadron in the sea of Port Arthur and Vladivostok as well as that performed by the Second Pacific Squadron on its route to Tsushima.[13]

The literature of MI at the disposal of the ordinary reader is not perhaps so copious, as one might have expected. In fact, the staffs of both armies imposed unusual restrictions on press correspondents. These restrictions, though, as will be shown later, not incompatible with accurate sorting out of war episodes, definitely curtailed the number of military observers and correspondents who remained in the theatre of war, and so limited narratives emanating from that source. Another serious cause of restrictions was the language barrier, for the Russian and especially Japanese tongues were known to but few other Europeans or Americans. Regrettable as this drawback was, the narratives of press correspondents, the reports of contending and neutral professional eye-witnesses and the records of actual combatants laid the foundation for the present study (see the selected bibliography). A typical work of this kind was a combination of personal narrative and journalistic study.

From the first cannon volleys in Manchuria, the belligerent governments set up special editorial boards to issue weekly records of warfare. These periodicals were usually supplemented with pictures of military leaders, higher commanders and heads of their staffs, sometimes even of battle episodes and scenes of daily routine. Though pictures of reconnaissance raids or captured spies were few in the photo chronicles of the war, it is only by testing, comparing and evaluating the evidence of every class of witness that the truth can be finally obtained.[14]

Special reference should also be made to lectures delivered by professors and students at the Russian General Staff Academy, particularly those by former combatants. Intelligence preparations for the conflict in the Far East, reconnaissance operations in the theatre of war and activities of the Russian and Japanese secret services figured in these papers. Their summary, edited by the prominent military expert Professor Aleksei Baiov, was published in 1906–7.[15]

Analogously, the British, American, French and German General Staffs issued voluminous digests of commentaries on the Far Eastern hostilities, including information about espionage and counter-intelligence. The authors, especially active officers attached to the Russian or Japanese armed services, provided their superiors with characteristics of ammunition, naval vessels, fortifications, and undoubtedly, above all, commanders of different levels.[16]

For example, three British attachés with the Russian forces, General Sir Montague Gerard, Colonel H. H. H. Waters and Major Home had been particularly chosen to report on their combatant spirits and skills and, as should be emphasized, to evaluate the extent of the Russian threat to India.[17]

Naturally, the initial publications by Russian observers were deficient in sound and unbiased analysis of MI, inasmuch as a majority of them were deeply impressed or even dismayed by the setbacks in Manchuria suffered by the tsarist 'invincible' armies. A certain period of time was needed to produce a more comprehensive view, lacking in individual idiosyncrasies. As to the particular role of MI in the war, the first analytical papers tackling this problem were published in 1907–11, i.e. in the period of hasty reorganization of the imperial armed forces. The most valuable primary sources, besides official dispatches by Russian military attachés and general-staffers (*genshtabisty*), proved to be diary entries and

memoirs compiled by officers who contributed to the establishment of land and naval MI at different levels, e.g. those by Boris Dolivo-Dobrovolskii, Nikolai Klado, Dmitrii Parskii, Vladimir Semenov, Igor Shakhnovskii, Mikhail Bubnov, Edward Vertsinskii, Michail Grulev, Petr Izmestiev, Aleksandr Svechin, Aleksandr Skosarevskii, Nikolai Ukhach-Ogorovich, Mikhail Tyvder and many others.[18]

In general, they accumulated war experience of conducting intelligence operations both in the war of movement and in trenches. That is why some of their recollections, for instance those by Vladimir Buniakovskii, were later converted into handbooks for cadet schools and military colleges in Russia.[19]

One should devote particular attention to accounts penned by Aleksei Ignatiev, which though somewhat tendentious were rich in fascinating details. He held a position in the staff of the Commander-in-Chief during the Manchurian campaign, and presented, therefore, a vivid account of events he had witnessed. The only defect with his voluminous book was that he issued it decades after the war when his memory might have deteriorated to a certain extent.[20]

Accusations of non-professionalism together with sharp critical barbs against St Petersburg's high-ranking bureaucracy filled such works. They often coincided with opinions shared by the foreign observers mentioned above. Surprisingly for the empire of the tsar, almost all commentaries by Europeans were later published in Russian and carefully examined by the general-staffers. One should also keep in mind that not a few neutral correspondents or observers on the Manchurian front were charged by their governments with carrying on secret missions. It would appear probable that the French (official allies of Russia), the British (recognized partners of Japan) and the Germans (definitely interested in prolongation of the Far Eastern conflict) were indulging in intelligence operations most of all.[21]

A book or recollections by William Greener, the Briton who managed to cross Russia from the West to the East by railway on the eve of the war and was besieged in Port Arthur with the other defendants for several weeks, might not be regarded as a unique example of this kind. The author openly described how he had been seconded for a secret mission to the fortress under the assumed identity of *The Times* military correspondent. Despite sympathy to Japan, Greener, however, also paid tribute to the heroic protectors of Port Arthur, including officers in charge of reconnaissance.[22]

Both Russian and foreign military experts in their works, published before 1917, pointed out evident general inadequacies in the tsarist military system. As to Russian MI, it deserved criticism for inaccuracies in forecasts, a perfunctory, distorted knowledge of the potential adversary, lack of adequate schemes of intelligence process, poor coordination among staffers and between them and active commanders, drawbacks in the conduct of human intelligence (HUMINT) (or espionage), inefficiency in mounted and foot reconnaissance in the front area, and insufficient supply of special devices for the performance of spying. A typical example may be a prodigious work by Aleksei Kuropatkin, the War

Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Manchurian army, *Notes on the Russo-Japanese War*. In attempts to divest himself of responsibility for defeat, the author accused general-staffers of miscalculating and underestimating the Japanese military capabilities.[23]

The beginning of the First World War followed by the Civil War in Russia removed somehow the unsuccessful campaign in the Far East to the background of social memory, especially after earlier foes had signed a treaty of alliance in 1916. But the authors of two studies on the history of intelligence – Major General Petr Riabikov, the former aide-de-camp assistant in the staff of the Second Manchurian Army and later professor at the General Staff Academy, and the Soviet military expert Konstantin Zvonarev (Zvaigzne) – summed up experience gained by spying in 1904–5.[24]

While Riabikov appreciated the achievements attained by the tsarist MI in the strict differentiation between the stages of the intelligence process together with bringing in new methods of data verification and those of converting nuggets of information into finished product, Zvonarev sharply criticized autocratic structures, not excluding the tsarist MI. Most often, however, his invectives seemed far from objectivity. He was not correct, for instance, in the survey of military attachés' activities, in the evaluation of the pre-war mapping and charting intelligence by Russian general-staffers, or in the depiction of counter-espionage methods applied by Russian military commissars in the war area.[25]

His ultimately negative attitude to the predecessors of Soviet intelligence (Zvonarev held a higher position in it after 1917), whose experience he successfully used in his own pursuit of the White Guardians, culminated in an assertion running as a categorical verdict: 'Thus, the Russian army began and finished the war against Japan without intelligence at all, and, accordingly, without any knowledge of its adversary'.[26]

Another pinnacle of interest to the history of intelligence marked the late 1930s, i.e. the period of intensive struggle for mastery in the world intelligence community. That emergence of the war hotbed in the Far East stimulated the unprecedented activities of secret service in the region. Hundreds of spies were recruited by governments for covert operations. Thus, practical needs brought into life extensive explorations of some earlier evolution of MI. However, predominant attention was given to archival research together with the study of counter-espionage structures.[27]

Later, academic historians attempted to scrupulously depict all the more or less decisive land and naval battles. As Christopher Andrew correctly notes, while 'discouraged by the difficulty of researching the intelligence records and repelled by the inaccurate sensationalism of many best-selling accounts of espionage', academic historians have usually tended either to ignore MI or to treat it as of much less importance than other problems of the Russo-Japanese War. Some historians have chosen the way of simply interpreting earlier treatises by Kuropatkin, Riabikov or Zvonarev. The main reason for neglecting MI was, however, inaccessibility of archival collections in the Soviet Union.[28]

The third boom in the study of the war occurred after the collapse of the

Soviet Union, when scholars got access to archival collections of primary source material. Besides, the process of reorganization in the post-Soviet secret service triggered a new round of explorations.

At present, however, just a few works on MI, penned by a younger generation of Russian historians – Ilia Derevianko, Yurii Shelukhin, Michail Alekseev, Ivan Kravtsev, Vladimir Glushkov, Aleksandr Sharavin, Dmitrii Pavlov – may be regarded as those of interest and importance.[29] Besides, the authors of the *Studies in the History of the Russian Foreign Intelligence*, edited by Evgenii Primakov, contributed to the research of MI.[30] The genre has recently embraced books and articles by Vladimir Petrov, Petr Podalko, Yelena Dobychina, Robert Kondratenko, Vladimir Kashirin and others, who examined the activities of Russian military and naval attachés in the Far East at the start of the twentieth century.[31] This increasing attention to the hostilities between Russia and Japan was obviously caused by the approach of the centenary of the war.

Because of their limited access to archival records, Western academic scholars had proved unable to choose MI as a special subject of study until the collapse of the USSR. Only in the 1990s, did they publish books and articles covering some problems interrelated with Russian MI. For example, Bruce Menning investigated the evolution of the Russian army from the Miliutin reforms up to the outbreak of the First World War. A separate chapter of his book exposed various aspects of the Manchurian campaign of 1904–5, including intelligence operations, which he commented upon with a good deal of criticism. One of the conclusions by Professor Menning focused on the assertion that Kuropatkin 'was badly supplied with tactical intelligence'.[32]

To this pioneering study were later added several articles on developments in the tsarist armed forces, where MI figured as well. Interestingly, the author has mellowed his earlier critical opinion upon it. Now he writes that 'the Russians possessed far better intelligence on the Japanese than has heretofore been judged the case'. The problem was in the failure of higher echelons of commanders 'to avail themselves of the materials' presented by general-staffers and 'advantages they had at hand'.[33]

David Schimmelpenninck published a series of studies concentrating on the immediate origins of hostilities and the course of events in the Russo-Japanese War.[34] He also traced the developments of Russian MI long before the Far Eastern conflict as well as giving a critical interpretation of its role on the Manchurian front. Based on primary archival sources, his works contributed to a far more objective picture of MI activities primarily at the strategic level and at operational levels on land.[35]

The recent publications by David Alan Rich also provide a comprehensive analysis of Russian MI in the periods before the reign of Nicholas II. The author gives details about internal composition of the tsarist secret service and portrays some prominent figures among the closest circle of the tsar who took responsibility for building foundations for effective intelligence.[36]

A succinct review of studies on the history of Russian MI would be incomplete without works by the Japanese professor Chiharu Inaba who devoted much

attention, as well as to counter-espionage, to the less known SIGINT (wire interception and code breaking) and Franco-Russian collaboration during the course of the war.[37]

Based on a prodigious survey of new archival materials as well as on wide reading in the primary and secondary literature on modern Russian history, the book will examine both the underpinnings and evolution of MI in Russia on the eve of, in the course of and in the aftermath of the war against Japan. Much attention will also be given to experience gained from warfare by the Russian secret service and to the impact it made upon the reorganization of imperial defence in the aftermath.

These hugely important items are approached from a fresh look upon archival holdings. Most of them are concentrated in the Russian State Military-Historical Archive (Moscow) and in the Russian State Naval Archive (St Petersburg). They preserve documentary collections of the Main Staff, of the headquarters of the Manchurian armies and the Pacific navy, together with miscellaneous central and regional military structures, e.g. headquarters of the Priamur military district, Military Chancellery of Quantung province and the headquarters of Zaamur military district of Special Corps of Frontier Guards. The author also consulted personal dossiers and papers of generals and admirals such as Aleksei Kuropatkin, Evgenii Alekseev, Michail Alekseev, Vladimir Kosagovskii and Vasilii Flug.

Reports, memoranda, analytical reviews by military attachés; notes and minutes by the staff officers in charge of intelligence processes; projects, plans and schedules of war games at the General Staff Academy; maps, sketch-maps, target charts and figures of different kinds often supplement official and private correspondence – all these documents constitute the principal foundation of the present study.

A thorough analysis of archival holdings together with a comprehensive study of memoirs and literature on the subject goes hand in hand with a proper examination of voluminous surveys of war operations given in the official documentary publications by the special government commissions instituted in Russia after the end of hostilities. Despite the obvious deficit in correctness and accuracy, these compendiums contain a lot of significant details relating to MI.[38]

A variety of intelligence summaries and digests compiled by the General Staff officers (or in abbreviated form – *generalists*) on the Manchurian front, seem to be also of principal importance to this study. As a matter of fact, they demonstrate such novel approaches and methods in MI as the interrogation of local inhabitants and prisoners of war (POWs), the examination of artefacts exposed by scouts on the Russian service in the frontline area, the utilization of balloons, optical devices, radio stations, wire interceptions and even submarines for spying.[39]

Surprisingly, research in American and British archives also contributed to the study. This means especially the reports of naval attachés and the dispatches of US or British consuls accredited in the main seaports of the Far East, who witnessed war operations or were somehow related to the activities of MI.

Finally, it should be noted that we also consulted a few belletristic works whose authors endeavour to novelize the history of the Russo-Japanese War. Although sometimes either distorting facts or veiling realities, they procure a kind of 'epoch fragrance' that enables the modern reader to plunge into the whirlpool of dramatic events dated to the beginning of the last century.[40]

The core of the book is organized as ten chapters dealing with various aspects of Russian MI, both land and naval, before and during the warfare, as well as in the immediate aftermath. While the initial chapters expose the composition of the Russian intelligence community in the late imperial era and speculate on the assessments of Japan's war capabilities made by Russian staffs, the consequent sections of the book tackle crucial and much debated issues referring to the belligerents at three interconnected levels: strategic, operational and tactical. Two concluding chapters reflect the dilemmas of the peace conference at Portsmouth and spotlight the impact of the Russo-Japanese War upon military reforms in Russia.

* * *

The context is supplied with maps, figures and notes together with an index of Russian officers, mainly of the General Staff in charge of MI in 1904–5 in the Far East. All dates in the main text are rendered according to the Gregorian calendar employed in the West which is 12 days in the nineteenth and 13 days in the twentieth century ahead of the Julian one in use by the Russians before 1918. The author usually refers to the metric system, although in a number of episodes *versta* – a traditional old Russian unit of distance, approximately equivalent to a kilometre – is in use too. The golden rouble was equivalent to one tenth of a pound sterling at the start of the twentieth century.

Transliteration from the Cyrillic alphabet adheres to the Library of Congress system without diacritic marks, while common spellings are given to most proper names. As for Chinese lexical units, the author generally follows the Pinyin system with the exception of frequently used names, such as Peking or Mukden.

In notes and commentaries for archival materials, the author puts *f.* for *fond* (collection), *op.* for *opis'* (inventory), *d.* for *delo* (file) and *l. (ll.)* for *list* (*lists*) (folio, folios).