

JTMUN 2024



Russo-Japanese War: World War Zero

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Contents

Equity Disclaimers	3
Model United Nations at U of T Code of Conduct	
5	
Letter from the Director	7
Introduction	8
Definitions	9
Front Room	9
Back Room	9
Directives	9
Imperialism	9
New Imperialism	9
Spheres of Influence	10
Manchuria	10
Port Arthur	10
Trans-Siberian Railway	10
Man-Kan kokan	10
Genro	10
History	11
Convention of Kanagawa and the opening of Japan (1854)	11
Aftermath of the Second Opium War (1858 - 1860)	11

Tsushima Incident (1861)	12
Meiji Restoration (1868)	12
Birth of Anglo-Japanese Naval Cooperation (1873)	12
Treaty of Ganghwa Island (1876)	13
Construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway Begins (1881)	13
First Sino-Japanese War (1894)	14
The Treaty of Shimonoseki and the Three-Power Intervention (1895)	14
Chinese Eastern Railway, the Li-Lobanov Treaty (1896) and the Pavlov Agreement (1898)	15
Yamagata-Lobanov Agreement (1896) and Nishi-Rosen Agreement (1898)	15
Boxer Rebellion and the Russian Invasion of Manchuria (1900)	16
Man-Kan kokan and further Russo-Japanese negotiations (1901)	16
Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902)	17
Incomplete Russian exit from Manchuria (1902 - 1903)	17
Final Negotiations and the Lead-up to War (1903 - 1904)	18
State of Affairs	19
Topics for Japan	21
Control over Territorial Objectives, Naval Supremacy, and Limited Resources	21
Interservice Rivalry	21
International Diplomacy	22
Bibliography	23

Equity Disclaimers

Throughout this committee, delegates will be engaging in complex debates and discussions covering a wide array of topics. As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the implications of real-world issues, the content of our committees may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter for the purposes of academia and accuracy. We ask that delegates be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position in an equitable manner, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

This Background Guide and Russo-Japanese War: Japan presents topics that may be distressing to some Delegates, including but not limited to the following: graphic details around military conflict and strategy, domestic unrest and state suppression of said dissent, discussions around repercussions and acts of imperialism and colonialism.

As this is a war committee, please refrain from including depictions of gore, exploitation of prisoners of war or Indigenous communities, excessive violence, inhumane treatment of anyone, etc. in committee speeches, private directives, public directives, notes, conversations, etc. UTMUN recognizes the sensitivity associated with many of our topics, and we encourage you to be aware of and set healthy boundaries that work for you. This may include: refraining from reading certain parts of the background guide, preparing yourself before reading this background guide, doing some self-care or seeking support after reading the background guide, or anything that can help make you feel more comfortable. We ask that all Delegates remain considerate of the boundaries that other Delegates set.

UTMUN expects that all discussions amongst delegates will remain productive and respectful of one another. If you have any equity concerns or need assistance in setting boundaries or navigating sensitive subject matter or have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org. We want you to feel safe and comfortable at UTMUN!

If you wish to switch committees after having read the content warnings for this committee, please do the following:

a) Fill out the [UTMUN 2024 Committee Switch Request Form](#).

If you have any equity concerns, equity-based questions, or delegate conflicts, please do any of the following:

1. Email equity@utmun.org to reach Harvi Karatha, email deputy.equity@utmun.org to reach Iva Zivaljevic, or reach out to me at rjwar@utmun.org.
2. Fill out the Anonymous (if preferred) UTMUN Equity Contact Form: <https://forms.gle/XEH3DCTwX3JzzSnr6>.
3. Notify/Ask any staff member to connect you to Harvi Karatha or Iva Zivaljevic.

Model United Nations at U of T Code of Conduct

The below code of conduct applies to all attendees of UTMUN 2024 for the entire duration of the conference, and any conference-related activities (including but not limited to committee sessions, conference socials, committee breaks, and the opening and closing ceremonies).

1. Harassment and bullying in any form will not be tolerated, the nature of which includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, mental and physical disabilities, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression,
 - a. Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, insulting and/or degrading language or remarks; threats and intimidation; and intentional (direct or indirect) discrimination and/or marginalization of a group and/or individual;
 - i. The above prohibition on harassment, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour extends to any and all behaviour as well as written and verbal communication during the conference, including notes, conversation both during and outside committees, and general demeanour at all conference events;
 - ii. UTMUN reserves the right to determine what constitutes bullying and/or inappropriate behaviour toward any individual and/or group;
 - b. Attendees must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes physical violence or the threat of violence against any groups and/or individuals, including sexual violence and harassment, such as, but not limited to,
 - i. Unwelcome suggestive or indecent comments about one's appearance;
 - ii. Nonconsensual sexual contact and/or behaviour between any individuals and/or groups of individuals;
 - iii. Sexual contact or behaviour between delegates and staff members is strictly forbidden;
2. UTMUN expects all attendees to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times during the conference. Specific expectations, include, but are not limited to,
 - a. Attendees must, if able, contribute to the general provision of an inclusive conference and refrain from acting in a manner that restricts other attendees' capacity to learn and thrive in an intellectually stimulating environment;
 - b. Attendees must adhere to the dress code, which is Western business attire;
 - i. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the attendees' ability to adhere to the previous sub-clause;
 - ii. Attendees are encouraged to contact Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org with questions or concerns about the dress code or conference accessibility;

- c. Attendees must refrain from the use of cultural appropriation to represent their character and/or country, including the use of cultural dress, false accent, and any behaviour that perpetuates a national or personal stereotype;
- d. Delegates must not use music, audio recordings, graphics, or any other media at any time unless approved and requested to be shared by the Dais and/or the Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha at equity@utmun.org;
- e. Attendees must abide by instructions and/or orders given by conference staff, members;
 - i. Attendees are exempt from this above sub-clause only if the instructions and/or orders given are unreasonable or inappropriate;

3. Delegates, staff, and all other conference participants are expected to abide by Ontario and Canadian laws and Toronto by-laws, as well as rules and regulations specific to the University of Toronto. This includes, but is not limited to,

- a. Attendees, regardless of their age, are strictly prohibited from being under the influence and/or engaging in the consumption of illicit substances, such as alcohol or illicit substances for the duration of the conference;
- b. Attendees are prohibited from smoking (cigarettes or e-cigarettes, including vapes) on University of Toronto property;
- c. Attendees must refrain from engaging in vandalism and the intentional and/or reckless destruction of any public or private property, including conference spaces, venues, furniture, resources, equipment, and university buildings;
 - i. Neither UTMUN nor any representatives of UTMUN is responsible for damage inflicted by attendees to property on or off University of Toronto campus;
 - ii. Individuals will be held responsible for any damages.

4. The Secretariat reserves the right to impose restrictions on delegates and/or attendees for not adhering to/violating any of the above stipulations. Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to,

- a. Suspension from committee, in its entirety or for a specific period of time;
- b. Removal from the conference and/or conference venue(s);
- c. Disqualification from awards;
- d. Disqualification from participation in future conference-related events.

5. UTMUN reserves the right to the final interpretation of this document.

For further clarification on UTMUN's policies regarding equity or conduct, please see this [form](#). For any questions/concerns, or any equity violations that any attendee(s) would like to raise, please contact UTMUN's Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org or fill out this anonymous Equity Contact Form: <https://forms.gle/Psc5Luxp22T3c9Zz8>.

Letter from the Director:

Greetings from the Far East!

My name is Je Ho Cho, and I will be your Director for the Russo-Japanese War Joint Crisis this year at UTMUN 2024! A little bit about me: I'm a fourth-year International Relations and Peace, Conflict, and Justice Studies double major at UofT. I've been doing Model United Nations since high school, travelled overseas for conferences, and have participated in UofT's MUN circuit for the last three years—including UTMUN 2022 where I was a part of the Ireland 2024 Crisis Committee as a Moderator. Outside of MUN, I practise Kendo, a Japanese martial art, and enjoy making my own coffee and coming up with new recipes in my spare time.

Beyond introducing myself, I would like to warmly welcome you to Northeast Asia in 1904. The stage is set for a clash between the Japanese and Russian Empires. Colonial aspirations, strategic military manoeuvres, and deft international diplomacy will all be featured in this simulation. I've specifically designed this committee to appeal to the delegates that hunger for their strategic visions to have rippling outward consequences, and for the delegates that enjoy the risk taking thrill that comes with tiptoeing the line between total domestic collapse and ultimate victory. While the two rooms will grapple with each other on the battlefield, it also is critical to understand the global scale of the conflict and its implications. Overseas interests in Europe and the USA will be watching the developments of the committee keenly, and it will be in the best interests for both sides to solicit positive international opinion of your nation. If any of this sounds appealing to you, you've found yourself in the right place.

For those who prefer working behind the scenes—plotting the downfall of your fellow countrymen for your own gain—look no further than this simulation. Internal political dynamics to unset your rivals and advance your own personal agenda will also be a feature of this committee. Work to gain the favour of your monarch, sully the good reputation of those that stand against your strategic and political agenda, and build internal blocs to share this newfound political capital. But be warned, a defeat on the battlefield and the boardroom could spell doom for your personal ambitions.

Being a student of history and of global geopolitics, I designed this committee to maximise the accuracy of the simulation without railroading your actions to a certain conclusion. If you ever have any questions or concerns about any of the committee content listed below, please feel free to reach out to me either before or during the conference.

Yours truly,

Je Ho Cho
Director of the Russo-Japanese War
rjwar@utmun.org

Introduction:

The events of the Russo-Japanese War began in February 1904 at the start of hostilities between the Empire of Japan and the Russian Empire. Without any formal declaration of war, Japan launched a surprise attack on the Russian naval base at Port Arthur, a Russian concession on the Liaodong Peninsula in present-day Manchuria. The two powers, having been unable to come to terms over disagreement concerning spheres of influence in Manchuria and Korea, are now plunged into conflict. The war will be a test of Meiji-era Japan's military capabilities against an imperial European power—will the modernization and militarization efforts of Japan be able to overcome the Russian colossus?

The Empire of Japan has spent the last half century deep in breakneck reform. Following the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate, a group of foreign-educated elites from the Satsuma and Choshu domains that led the revolt against the government elevated the young Emperor Meiji into the status of absolute monarch of Japan. Dubbed the Meiji Restoration, the country would then undergo rapid development emulating European models of industrial production, naval and military organisation, political systems, and even cultural practices. Wary of Western colonial ambitions that had carved up neighbouring Qing China, the Meiji reforms were justified by the government under the premise of defending Japanese sovereignty by creating their own empire—attaining overseas colonies and the prestige that came with it. Despite these revolutionary changes to Japanese politics and society, the Empire of the Rising Sun in 1904 has yet to face a European foe in battle: having only defeated China and usurping its status as suzerain of Korea in 1894.

Standing in the way of these imperial ambitions is the Russian Empire, who has carefully observed Japan's growing Pacific ambitions with suspicion and has rejected any Japanese proposals for a division of influence in the region. Russian troops already occupy most of former Qing territory in Manchuria, and are the owners of the coveted Liaodong Peninsula that was forcibly snatched away from the Japanese after the threat of multi-power military intervention. They also control the Chinese Eastern Railway, the strategic rail artery that sustains the entire Russian presence in the region. Japan must secure these critical objectives in the event of war if they are to eject the Russian Empire from their Far East holdings. Japan's forces number far fewer than Russia's: but the advantage of surprise and the sheer distance of East Asia from European Russia may give a few months for the Japanese military to deliver a knockout blow on land and sea. Failure to do so could entrap Japan into a bloody battle of attrition—one that Japan has neither the manpower nor funds to fight.

The Empire of Japan stands at the precipice of history. If it emerges victorious in its bout with Russia it could send shockwaves across the globe as one of the first non-European nations to fell an imperial power—earning it the prestige it so bitterly desires. But if it fails, the entire structure of nearly half a century of Meiji modernization could come tumbling down—alongside any semblance of Japanese national independence.

Definitions:

FRONT ROOM

The “Front Room” of a Crisis Committee is where debate, discussion over directives, and face-to-face interaction with other delegates takes place: the standard area where Model United Nations happens. Public directives are tabled, discussed, and voted upon in the Front Room.

BACK ROOM

The “Back Room” of a Crisis Committee is where delegates can influence the committee in real-time through political actions, military commands, and espionage amongst other creative means to create a favourable situation in the Front Room.

DIRECTIVES

Directives serve as the primary way that delegates can conduct actions in a Crisis Committee: the standard MUN equivalent would be a resolution or working paper. There are two types of directives: public and private. **Public directives** are essentially resolutions or working papers that are debated and voted on in the front room—they represent the actions taken by the committee as a whole. **Private directives** are notes sent to the Back Room and are private actions taken by your own character that do not require the approval of other members of the committee.

IMPERIALISM

Imperialism, as defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica, is a state policy or practice of direct territorial acquisition through political, economic, military, or other subtle means.¹ Imperial rule was often accompanied by practices of colonialism in exploitative, settler, surrogate, or internal arrangements. Imperial policy, and its supporters, oftentimes justified the dominion over other peoples and their territories with maligned rhetoric of cultural or civilizational superiority.

NEW IMPERIALISM SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

During the mid-to-late 19th and 20th centuries, New Imperialism was a historical period where the states in Europe, America, and Japan sought to greatly expand their imperial holdings to overseas territories in Africa and Asia.² Prominent events during this period include the Berlin Conference that saw Europeans establish a set of agreements concerning expansion in Africa, the Opium Wars and the American-led Open Door Policy in China, and the Russo-Japanese War.

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Spheres of influence are claims made by states over exclusive or predominant territorial control, oftentimes of territory beyond what is formally owned by said state. These spheres are usually outlined and utilised in the context of alliance structures, overseas economic interests, or military significance, and may or may not receive recognition from other states.³

¹“Imperialism | Definition, History, Examples, & Facts | Britannica,” November 6, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/imperialism>.

²“New Imperialism | Definition, History, & Causes | Britannica,” December 12, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-Imperialism>

³“Sphere of Influence | Definition, History, & Facts | Britannica,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sphere-of-influence>.

MANCHURIA

Manchuria is a region of northeastern China, encompassing the modern-day Chinese provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning but also has historically included areas within Inner Mongolia and the Russian Far East.⁴ At the time of this committee, the border between Qing China and the Russian Empire was demarcated at the Amur River, but Russian influence freely seeped into the region through railroad links and extraterritorial arrangements in key areas such as Port Arthur and Dalny (present-day Dairen). Russian troops also occupy most of present-day Manchuria following the events of the Boxer Rebellion.

PORT ARTHUR

At the time of this committee, Port Arthur—today a part of the Chinese city of Dairen—is a strategic military base located on the Liaodong Peninsula in Manchuria.⁵ In the First Sino-Japanese War between Japan and China, it was captured by forces of the Empire of Japan but was eventually returned to China after the threat of the Three-Power Intervention. Leased for 25 years to the Russian Empire from the Qing Dynasty after the Pavlov Agreement in 1898, the naval base serves as Russia's first naval installation outside of Europe that does not freeze over during the winter, making it a valuable military asset for Russian force projection in East Asia.

MAN-KAN KOKAN

A term first introduced in 1901 that describes the Japanese proposal for a modus vivendi in East Asia between the Russian and Japanese Empires. Presented by the former Japanese Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi, the concept outlined that both states would mutually recognize each others' sphere of influence in Manchuria (for Russia) and Korea (for Japan). The proposal was rejected by the Russians on the grounds that the question of Manchuria was exclusively the realm of bilateral talks between themselves and the Qing Dynasty, and would be one of the final attempts by Japan to negotiate a settlement prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.⁶

GENRO

Meaning “principal elder,” Genro was an unofficial designation for members of a group of oligarchical elder Japanese statesmen that held a large degree of extra constitutional influence to the government during the Meiji period (and into the Showa period). The Genro was primarily composed of military men and politicians from the Satsuma and Choshu domains during the feudal Tokugawa period, and were among the first foreign-educated Japanese in government.⁷

⁴“Manchuria | Historical Region, Chinese Empire & Soviet Union | Britannica,” <https://www.britannica.com/place/Manchuria>

⁵ V. S Semenov, *Siberia: Its Conquest and Development*, (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963), 342.

⁶ Ian Nish, “2. Komura, The British Alliance And The Russo-Japanese War,” in *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5* (Brill, 2008), 22–31, https://brill.com/display/book/9789004213326/Bej.9781905246199.i-348_003.xml.

⁷“Genro | Political Elite, Meiji Restoration & Imperialism | Britannica,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/genro>.

History:

Convention of Kanagawa and the opening of Japan (1854)

In 1853, American naval officer Commodore Matthew Perry entered Japan with a force of gunboats and the orders to open up Japan to foreign trade. Prior to this, the Tokugawa Shogunate that ruled over Japan had pursued a policy of isolation and extremely limited foreign contact. Using the threat of force from his advanced armada of steam-powered gunboats, Perry was able to force the Shogunate to negotiate and sign a Treaty of Peace and Amity in 1854 that effectively opened up the country to foreign trade and influence. Many similar treaties with imperial European powers would soon follow, and Japan under the Shogunate would be subject to Western influence and extraterritoriality. The forced opening of Japan under the Tokugawa Shogunate to foreigners would anger some portions of Japanese society, and be one of the motivating factors behind the eventual end of the bakufu.

Aftermath of the Second Opium War (1858-1860)

After being defeated by a combined force of British and French troops, the Qing Dynasty was forced to open additional treaty ports and legations in cities across China. With the threat of an additional front opening with the Russian Empire, the Qing Dynasty signed the following treaties with Russia. The Treaty of Aigun, signed in 1858 between the Russian Empire and the Qing Dynasty that ruled China, set the Amur River as the natural border between the two states.⁸ The Peking Convention: signed in 1860 between the participants of the Second Opium War (France and the UK) as well as Russia and the US, ceded the Manchurian coast to Russia as well. After these treaties, Imperial Russia would establish the city of Vladivostok in 1860. Japan would look upon the dismemberment of Qing China with great alarm, and reformers would use the example of China as a warning for what may happen if Japanese sovereignty was ever compromised by the West.

⁸“Russian-Chinese Treaty of Aigun Concluded,” Presidential Library of Russia, <https://www.prlib.ru/en/history/619270>.

Tsushima Incident (1861)

A diplomatic incident between the Russian Empire and Tokugawa Shogunate that saw a Russian attempt to establish a permanent naval position on Tsushima Island off of the coast of the Japanese Home Islands. The Russians were eventually dissuaded from doing this as a result of British intervention, but this would only be the first attempt to claim a warm-water mooring for the Russian Navy in the region.⁹

Meiji Restoration (1868)

Emerging as a result of perceived Shogunate ineffectiveness at expelling foreign influence from Japan (re: Commodore Matthew Perry), the Meiji Restoration was a period of the 19th century after the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate where Japan embarked on a series of European-styled modernization reforms in government, society, military, and manufacturing. Spearheaded by the Choshu and Satsuma domains in the feudal period, it emphasised a political consolidation of the territories previously ruled by regional daimyo lords now nominally under the new Emperor Meiji (but actually under a new oligarchy of advisors known as the Genro). The Restoration and ensuing period of reform during the Meiji period would lead to a new nationalism and translate itself into enhanced colonial activity abroad.¹⁰ Japanese industrial production boomed as foreign experts were brought in to modernise the economy and update the military to the standards and systems of the Prussian military: the most effective European army at the time. Naval cooperation and training between the British would also result in the birth of the modern Japanese Navy.

Birth of Anglo-Japanese Naval Cooperation (1873)

Building on the precedent of an earlier British naval training program under the Tracey Mission in 1867, Anglo-Japanese naval cooperation expanded under the Meiji Restoration in 1873 with the arrival of British naval officers at the Imperial Naval College in Tokyo: they would instruct the budding naval officer corps of Meiji Japan until 1879. Various other British naval officers would continue to instruct in naval academies in Japan while Japanese naval cadets would also be trained overseas in Britain, and the Meiji government would commission its first modern warships from British shipyards that would be completed in 1878. Of the 11 battleships deployed by Japan at the outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese War, 7 were constructed by Britain.¹¹

⁹ Viktor Shmagin, "They Fear Us, yet Cling to Us: Russian Negotiations with Tsushima Domain Officials during the 1861 Tsushima Incident," *The International History Review* 39, no. 3 (May 27, 2017): 521–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2016.1218905>.

¹⁰ "Meiji Restoration | Summary, Effects, Social Changes, Significance, End, & Facts | Britannica," December 4, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Meiji-Restoration>.

¹¹ John Curtis Perry, "Great Britain and the Emergence of Japan as a Naval Power," *Monumenta Nipponica* 21, no. 3/4 (1966): 305–21, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2383375>.

Treaty of Ganghwa Island (1876)

Signed between the Empire of Japan and the Kingdom of Joseon, this “unequal treaty” essentially resembled the same European colonial treaties that were forced upon Qing China and the earlier Japanese Tokugawa Shogunate. The treaty was the result of a skirmish that arose after an attempted Japanese show of force near Ganghwa Island, owned by the Joseon Dynasty of Korea. Korean naval forts fired on the Japanese naval vessel and it subsequently sent a landing party of soldiers that killed several Koreans. Debates raged within the Japanese government on how to resolve this incident, including sending a punitive expedition to Korea and waging war against it: ultimately the government chose to negotiate and sign the treaty instead. The treaty granted extraterritorial rights to Japanese citizens, opened ports up to Japanese trade, and resulted in increased Japanese influence on Korea. The treaty also attempted to remove Qing suzerainty over Korea, but this would not be achieved in practice until the end of the First Sino-Japanese War.¹²

Construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway begins (1881)

Under the oversight of the recently inaugurated Tsar Nicholas II, construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway began in 1881.¹³ The goal of this railway was to facilitate increased connections between the developed European half of Russia and its more remote Eastern possessions in Asia, namely in Siberia. It would span the length of the Eurasian continent, only interrupted by Lake Baikal (which would be crossed by ferry or sled in the winter). The world’s longest railway, the Trans-Siberian would enable Russia to exert its influence over the vast steppe and Siberian wastelands, as well as deploy troops and allow for logistical routes to its Asian borderlands.

¹²Hans Lengerer, “The Kanghwa Affair and Treaty: A Contribution to the Pre-History of the Chinese-Japanese War 1894–95,” *Warship International* 57, no. 2 (2020): 110–31.

¹³ “Trans-Siberian Railroad | History, Map, Geography, & Facts | Britannica,” December 7, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Trans-Siberian-Railroad>.

First Sino-Japanese War (1894)

In response to a Chinese military intervention in Korea sent to suppress a religious peasant revolt called the Donghak, the Empire of Japan sent a military expedition to expel the Chinese and support the pro-modernization side against the Korean government. In the following war, Japan would defeat Qing China, capture Beijing and the Liaodong Peninsula, and expel Chinese troops from Korea. China's defeat exposed the weakness of the Qing Dynasty and sparked internal unrest that would eventually lead to the Boxer Rebellion that would break out in 1900.¹⁴ Japan's victory established it as a major regional power and led to its informal control over Korea as it formally severed its previous relationship with China. Russia would also begin to look upon Japan with suspicion, as their ambitions in the East could come under threat of this new regional power.

The Treaty of Shimonoseki and the Three-Power Intervention (1895)

The Treaty of Shimonoseki would end the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, with Qing China ceding Taiwan, the Pescadores Islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan as well as agreeing to end their suzerainty over Korea. Despite this signing, Japan would later be forced to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China in the Three-Power Intervention made up of Germany, Russia, and France. The European powers feared an influential Japan in the East that might threaten to sever China from their spheres of influence: Russia in particular felt the most direct threat to its Far East territory. The threat of military action by these three powers was enough for Japan to accede to their terms, but they would remain bitter about the affair.¹⁵

¹⁴Marius B. Jansen et al., "The Historiography of the Sino-Japanese War," *The International History Review* 1, no. 2 (1979): 191–227.

¹⁵Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, "The First Russo-Japanese Confrontation (1894-97)," in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985), 21-34.

Chinese Eastern Railway, the Li-Lobanov Treaty (1896) and the Pavlov Agreement (1898)

A secret unequal treaty signed between the Qing and Russian governments, the Li-Lobanov Treaty signed in 1896 allowed for the Tsarist-owned Russo-Chinese Bank to hold rights over construction of a railroad in Manchuria, extraterritorial rights, and access to Chinese ports in exchange for Russian loans. In 1898, Russia began construction concessions from China in the form of permission to build a link of the Trans-Siberian railway through Qing-owned Manchuria to link Vladivostok with Chita: this was called the Chinese Eastern Railway. In doing so, they also negotiated a 25-year lease on the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur through the Pavlov Agreement in 1898, extending the Chinese Eastern Railway down into the warm-water port city. This severely angered the Japanese, as the Russians were a part of the Three-Power Intervention that had stripped the Liaodong Peninsula away from Japan and now they were the owner of what Japan saw as their rightful conquest.¹⁶

Yamagata-Lobanov Agreement (1896) and Nishi-Rosen Agreement (1898)

The Yamagata-Lobanov Agreement (1896) and Nishi-Rosen Agreement (1898) were two agreements between Japan and Russia about the status of Korea and Manchuria. Initially, both sides agreed to maintain Korean sovereignty as a buffer state through a joint-protectorate arrangement, modernise Korea's economy, ensure Russia's interests in Manchuria, and allow for troops to be stationed in or sent into Korea. Important to note was that Japan was unaware of the Li-Lobanov Treaty allowing for Russian encroachment into Manchuria and Liaodong when they made the original agreement. The second agreement, signed after the Russian lease on the Liaodong Peninsula, both nations agreed to refrain from interfering in domestic Korean politics, Russia also pledged not to obstruct Japanese investment in the commercial and economic development of Korea, and Japan would recognize Russian control over the Liaodong.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, "The Far Eastern Crisis (1897-98)," in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985), 36-48

¹⁷ Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, "The Far Eastern Crisis (1897-98)," in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985), 36-48.

Boxer Rebellion and the Russian Invasion of Manchuria (1900)

An anti-foreigner rebellion fueled by anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiments among a group known as the "Boxers" broke out in 1900. They opposed the increasing influence and presence of foreign powers and Christian missionaries in China, and attacked foreigners and the legations in treaty port cities. During this period, Russian Admiral Alekseyev signed an agreement with the Governor-General of Mukden Tseng Chi: allowing for Russian troops to protect the foreign-built railways located in Manchuria. The rebellion was ultimately suppressed by a coalition of eight foreign powers, known as the Eight-Nation Alliance, including Japan, Russia, the United States, and European countries. This resulted in China signing the Boxer Protocol in 1901 which imposed heavy reparations on China and further diminished its sovereignty.¹⁸

During the negotiation of the Boxer Protocol, Russian "railway guards" were inserted into the region on the pretence of protecting the railway concessions in Manchuria, but were merely the first of a large military incursion into the territory. The Russian forces captured the whole of Manchuria from Qing and Boxer forces, occupying Mukden and exercising effective control of the entire region while utilising local collaborators. While the Boxer forces were defeated and scattered, Russian troops faced challenges demobilising due to the rise of banditry and general disorganisation of the forces: thus remaining in large numbers as garrison forces in Manchuria.¹⁹

Man-Kan kokan and Further Russo-Japanese Negotiations (1901)

Under the leadership of then-Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi, Japan would begin to send diplomatic overtures to Russia over the question of Manchuria and Korea. Adopting a policy of Man-Kan kokan that would limit Russian spheres of influence in East Asia solely to Manchuria and Japanese influence to Korea alone, the Japanese delegation was rebuffed by the Russian Foreign Minister Vladimir Lamsdorf— negotiations would then break down. Ito, whose Seiyukai party advocated for a peaceful solution to this issue, was asked to step down by the Emperor and replaced with the anti-Russian Katsura Taro.²⁰

¹⁸ "Boxer Rebellion | Significance, Combatants, & Facts | Britannica," December 26, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Boxer-Rebellion>

¹⁹ Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, "Manchuria under Boxers and Russians (1900-1901)," in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985), 83-93.

²⁰ Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, "Japan Resists over Manchuria (October 1900—June 1901)," in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985), 95-108.

Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902)

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902) was a military alliance signed between the Empire of Japan and the British Empire that obligated either side to declare neutrality if involved in a conflict with another power over the status of China and Korea. It also stipulated that either country should come to the other's assistance if multiple foreign powers were on the opposing side of the conflict, and prevented any separate peace agreements. The alliance would allow Japan freedom of movement and the guarantee that the British would come to their aid if another multi-power intervention was threatened against Japanese interests in the East.²¹

Incomplete Russian Exit from Manchuria (1902-1903)

Following the negotiation of the Boxer Protocol, pressure from other imperialist powers and the strain of financing the continued Russian occupation of Manchuria brought Russia and Qing China to sign an evacuation agreement in 1902. The Manchurian Convention, as the agreement was called, stipulated that Russia would gradually withdraw its troops from Manchuria in six month increments: given that no disturbances occurred and that China barred any other foreign power from filling the void left by the Russians. Despite initial adherence to the agreement, a mixture of confusion on the ground, apathy from Russian officials in executing the withdrawal, and imposition of additional demands sent to the Qing government led to delays and evacuation in only some select Manchurian provinces.²²

The end result of these delays were the retention of Russian troops in Manchuria: a state of affairs that roused deep suspicions within the Japanese government.²³

²¹ "Anglo-Japanese Alliance | Russo-Japanese War, Imperialism & Diplomacy | Britannica," accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Anglo-Japanese-Alliance>.

²² Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, "Russo-Chinese Convention and Its Aftermath (1902-3)," in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985), 138-150.

²³ Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, "Japan Resists over Manchuria (October 1900—June 1901)," in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985), 95-108.

Final Negotiations and the Lead-Up to War (1903-1904)

With tensions building over the stagnant progress over the Russian evacuation in Manchuria, negotiations between Russia and Japan were reopened in 1903. Japan presented terms that resembled its previous positions: mutual recognition of a Russian sphere in Manchuria and a Japanese sphere in Korea alongside stipulations of consultation before military intervention in either areas. The Japanese offer also sought to guarantee the “equal opportunity for the commerce and industry” of both powers in both areas. Russia sought to adhere to the 1900 policy that rejected Man-Kan kokan and saw Manchuria as a bilateral issue between Qing China and Russia. It also sought to undermine the Japanese in Korea, suggesting a buffer zone be established on the Korean 39th parallel.²⁴

The Japanese insistence that Russia’s military evacuation of Manchuria be completed was deemed a deal breaker in the eyes of the Tsarist ministers. Despite Japanese acquiescence to a neutral buffer zone on either side of the Yalu River, negotiations stalled as the Russian government delayed in responding. Japanese officials, meanwhile, began to receive concerning reports of Russian commercial logging interests penetrating past the Yalu River and into Korea: of which contained logging camps with military fortifications constructed into them. With the Russian rejection of the proposals in December of 1903, the Japanese Army began drawing up plans and preparing for war with Russia. The Navy requested additional time to prepare, and so the Japanese would delay plans to send a final ultimatum to Russia: an ultimatum that would be rejected in January of 1904.

²⁴Ian Nish and Harry Hearder, “Diplomatic Inactivity (September—November 1903),” in *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 1985).

State of Affairs:

The Attack on Port Arthur

The Japanese surprise attack on Port Arthur, despite catching the Russian Pacific Fleet completely off guard, has only inflicted temporary damage to the enemy. The damage done to the docked vessels in port was significant, but not irreparable. Two battleships of the Russian Pacific Fleet were damaged, and one cruiser was also hit by torpedoes. Port Arthur's powerful coastal batteries made it necessary to conduct the first attack under the cover of darkness, but any future attempts to sortie against the Russian Pacific Fleet's home anchorage may result in significant damage to the Japanese Navy.

Port Arthur as a naval anchorage also has several notable disadvantages, such as a low water level at low tide that forces the Russian ships to dock outside of the harbour entrance and leaves them vulnerable to attack. Should anything happen to block the narrow exit passageway of the harbour, it would effectively turn Port Arthur into an enclosed lake...

At the same time, a Japanese naval attack group also attacked a Russian grouping of ships docked in the Korean port of Chemulpo (modern-day Incheon). Having successfully destroyed the Russian ships, the Japanese proceeded to commence initial troop landing operations into Korea, with the goal of moving into Manchuria. Further troop landings are possible, given naval control over the Yellow Sea regions.

Japanese Military Assets and Readiness in Asia

For months, the Japanese Army has prepared extensively for hostilities with Russia. The Japanese field a total of 380,000 active troops with hundreds of thousands more in reserve. On the naval end, the Japanese Navy boasts 6 battleships, 10 cruisers, 40 destroyers, and a number of smaller vessels as well.

Japan's main issue will be the bottlenecked transportation of troops and supplies onto the mainland theatre in Manchuria and Korea. If the Japanese Navy is unable to protect the flow of troops and material into mainland Asia, the significant number of troops mobilised will simply wither on the vine for lack of adequate supplies.

International Reactions

Japan's successful surprise attack on Port Arthur shocked not just the Russians, but the rest of the world as well. Despite breaking the perceived conduct of war by launching an attack prior to a declaration of war, international opinion is beginning to shift towards predicting a Japanese victory against the Russians. Additional victories on land and sea may provide the impetus for foreign banks to begin issuing loans of foreign currency so desperately needed by the Army to finance their equipment purchases.

Topics for Japan:

Control over Territorial Objectives, Naval Supremacy, and Limited Resources

The primary goal for the delegates in the Japan committee of this simulation will be to quickly secure all the key territorial objectives in the theatre of operations. Doing so in a timely fashion will allow for a swift peace deal to be negotiated with the Russian Empire before the bulk of their reinforcements from European Russia arrive. While this general plan carries consensus, the exact method of conducting the war itself is still left up to the discretion of the committee. Several prongs of attack are possible: a landward thrust into the Liaodong from Korea, a naval landing onto Port Arthur once the Russian Pacific Fleet has been eliminated or neutralised, or bypassing Port Arthur entirely and focusing on the Chinese Eastern Railway deeper into Manchuria. All of these are potential options, but not all can be pursued in conjunction given limited time and resources.

What should be made abundantly clear is that a drawn-out war with Russia will result in an unfavourable outcome. Despite the half-century of modernization, Japan is still dwarfed by the Russian Empire in terms of total military strength and population. If a knockout blow is not accomplished within the first months of war, the Russian resolve may be strengthened and the scales tipped against Japan. It should be the priority of the delegates to secure a speedy and decisive resolution to the conflict.

Interservice Rivalry

One major problem to address is the issue of interservice rivalry. The two branches of the Japanese military, the Army and Navy, do not share the same strategic priorities and will contest each other for funding and manpower. Ministers in their respective branches will fight bitterly for their share of the Imperial budget, but it will ultimately be the decision of the Emperor Meiji on the topic of allocation of resources. Success in the battlefield, convincing argumentation, and obstructing the opposing branch may result in his favour and thus a larger portion of the national budget.

International Diplomacy

The war against Russia is not being fought behind closed doors—the rest of the world is watching closely. One of Japan’s main goals for the conflict with the Russian Empire is to enter the “imperial club” of nations that has only been occupied by European and American powers so far. Japanese delegates will have to campaign in the public relations realm as well: the supply of foreign currency to purchase valuable military equipment depends on it. Beyond projecting a positive public image to the imperial powers, delegates in the Japan committee can also attempt to leverage their existing alliance structures, or undermine Russia’s; those efforts may bear fruit in the future and shape the century to come in their favour.

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